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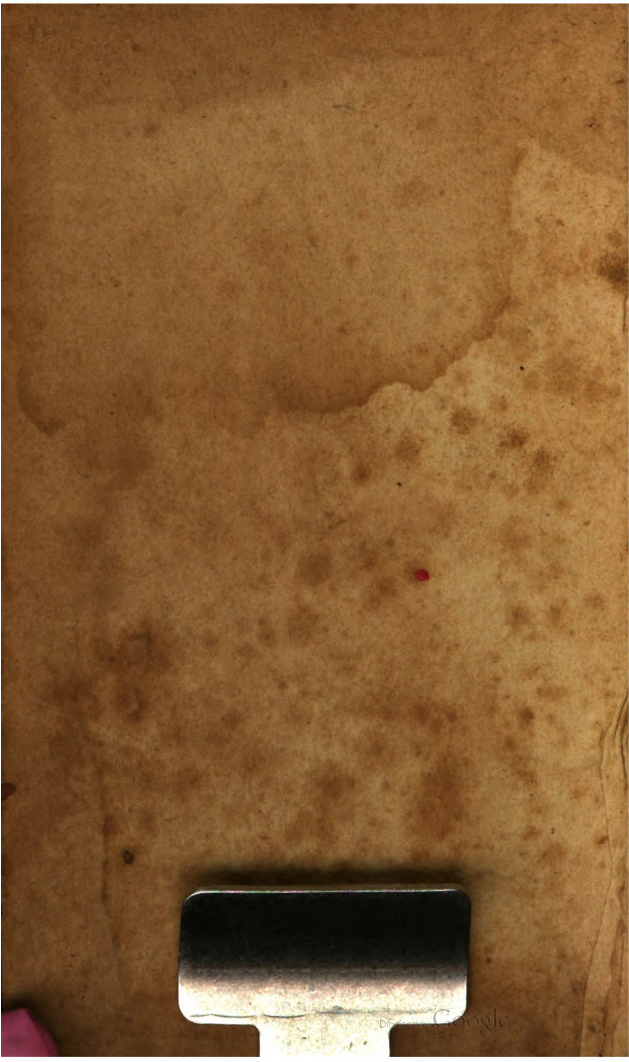
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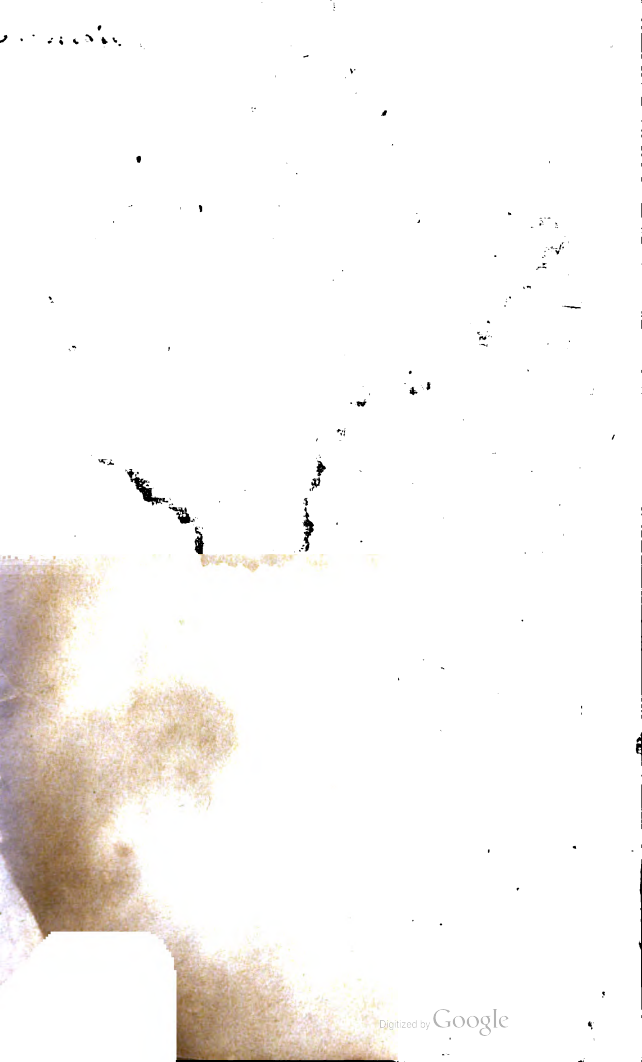
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THE LADY'S
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CONTAINING,

1. MISS MORE'S ESSAYS.

2. DR. GREGORY'S LEGACY

TO HIS DAUGHTERS.

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BY THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

4. MRS. CHAPONE'S

LETTER ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TEMPER.

5. SWIFT'S LETTER

TO A YOUNG LADY NEWLY MARRIED.

6. MOORE'S FABLES

FOR THE FEMALE SEX.

FOURTH AMERICAN EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED FOR AND PUBLISHED BY MATHEW CAREY,

No. 122, Market Street.

1809.

TO THE
LADIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE Editor of this publication hopes, from the established reputation of the several tracts of which it is composed, that it will be found a more complete system for the instruction of the female world than perhaps any other extant.

A volume, under the present title, was lately published in England and Ireland, and had a most rapid sale, having been purchased by almost every lady of taste in those kingdoms. To this volume the Editor has added Miss More's essays—rudiments of taste, by the countess of Carlisle—Mrs. Chapone's letter on the government of the temper—and Swift's letter to a young lady, newly married. These have considerably enhanced its value—and he doubts not, the ladies, on this side the Atlantic, will be as generous in their encouragement of a work intended for their advantage, as those in England and Ireland have been.

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MISS MORE'S ESSAYS.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is with the utmost diffidence that the following pages are submitted to the inspection of the public: yet, however the limited abilities of the author may have prevented her from succeeding to her wish, in the execution of her present attempt, she humbly trusts that the uprightness of her intention will procure it a candid and favourable reception. These little essays are chiefly calculated for the younger part of her own sex, who, she flatters herself, will not esteem them the less because they were written immediately for their service. She by no means pretends to have composed a regular system of morals, or a finished plan of conduct: she has only endeavoured to make a few remarks on such circumstances as seemed to her susceptible of some improvement, and on such subjects as she imagined were particularly interesting to young ladies, on their first introduction into the world. She hopes they will not be offended; if she has occasionally pointed out certain qualities, and suggested certain tempers and dispositions, as *peculiarly feminine*, and hazarded some observations, which naturally arose

from the subject, on the different characters which mark the sexes. And here again she takes the liberty to repeat that these distinctions cannot be too nicely maintained; for besides those important qualities common to both, each sex has its respective, appropriated qualifications, which would cease to be meritorious, the instant they ceased to be appropriated. Nature, propriety, and custom have prescribed certain bounds to each; bounds which the prudent and the candid will never attempt to break down; and indeed it would be highly impolitic to annihilate distinctions from which each acquires excellence, and to attempt innovations by which both would be losers.

Women, therefore, never understand their own interests so little, as when they affect those qualities and accomplishments, from the want of which they derive their highest merit. "The *porcelain* clay of human kind," says an admired writer, speaking of the sex. Greater delicacy evidently implies greater fragility; and this weakness, natural and moral, clearly points out the necessity of a superior degree of caution, retirement and reserve.

If the author may be allowed to keep up the allusion of the poet just quoted, she would ask, if we do not put the finest vases, and the costliest images in places of the greatest security, and most remote from any probability of accident or destruction? By being so situated, they find their protection in their weakness, and their safety in their delicacy. This metaphor is far from being used with a design of placing young ladies in a trivial, unimportant light; it is only

introduced to insinuate, that where there is more beauty, and more weakness, there should be greater circumspection and superior prudence.

Men, on the contrary, are formed for the more public exhibitions on the great theatre of human life. Like the stronger and more substantial wares, they derive no injury, and lose no polish, by being always exposed, and engaged in the constant commerce of the world. It is their proper element, where they respire their natural air, and exert their noblest powers, in situations which call them into action. They were intended by Providence for the bustling scenes of life—to appear terrible in arms, useful in commerce, shining in councils.

The author fears it will be hazarding a very bold remark, in the opinion of many ladies when she adds, that the female mind, in general, does not appear capable of attaining so high a degree of perfection in science, as the male. Yet she hopes to be forgiven, when she observes also, that as it does not seem to derive the chief portion of its excellence from extraordinary abilities of this kind, it is not at all lessened by the imputation of not possessing them. It is readily allowed, that the sex have lively imaginations, and those exquisite perceptions of the beautiful and defective, which come under the denomination of taste. But pretensions to that strength of intellect, which is requisite to penetrate into the abstruser walks of literature, it is presumed they will readily relinquish. There are green pastures, and pleasant vallies, where they may wander with safety to themselves, and delight to

others. They may cultivate the roses of imagination, and the valuable fruits of morals and criticism: but the steeps of Parnassus, few, comparatively, have attempted to scale with success. And when it is considered, that many languages, and many sciences, must contribute to the perfection of poetical composition, it will appear less strange. The lofty epic, the pointed satire, and the more daring and successful flights of the tragic Muse, seem reserved for the bold adventurers of the other sex.

Not does this assertion, it is apprehended, at all injure the interest of the women; they have other pretensions, on which to value themselves, and other qualities much better calculated to answer their particular purposes. We are enamoured of the soft strains of the Sicilian and the Mantuan Muse, while to the sweet notes of the pastoral reed, they sing the contentions of the shepherds, the blessings of love, or the innocent delights of rural life. Has it ever been ascribed to them as a defect, that their eclogues do not treat of active scenes, of busy cities, and of wasting war? No: their simplicity is their perfection; and they are only blamed when they have too little of it.

On the other hand, the lofty bards, who strung their bolder harps to higher measures, and sung the *Wrath of Peleus' son*, and *Man's first disobedience*, have never been censured for want of sweetness and refinement. The sublime, the nervous, and the masculine, characterise their compositions; as the beautiful, the soft, and the delicate, mark those of the others.—Grandeur,

dignity, and force, distinguished the one species; ease, simplicity, and purity, the other. Both shine from their native, distinct, unborrowed merits, not from those which are foreign, adventitious, and unnatural. Yet those excellencies, which make up the essential and constituent parts of poetry, they have in common.

Women have generally quicker perceptions: men have juster sentiments.—Women consider how things may be prettily said; men how they may be properly said.—In women, (young ones at least) speaking accompanies, sometimes precedes reflection; in men, reflection is the antecedent.—Women speak to shine or to please; men to convince or confute.—Women admire what is brilliant; men what is solid.—Women prefer an extemporaneous sally of wit, or a sparkling effusion of fancy, before the most accurate reasoning, or the most laborious investigation of facts. In literary composition, women are pleased with point, turn, and antithesis; men with observation, and a just deduction of effects from their causes.—Women are fond of incident; men of argument.—Women admire passionately; men approve cautiously.—One sex will think it betrays a want of feeling to be moderate in their applause; the other will be afraid of exposing a want of judgment by being in raptures with any thing. Men refuse to give way to the emotions they actually feel, while women sometimes affect to be transported beyond what the occasion will justify.

As a farther confirmation of what has been advanced on the different bent of the understand-

ing in the sexes, it may be observed, that we have heard of many female wits, but never of one female logician—of many admirable writers of memoirs, but never of one chronologer.—In the boundless and ærial regions of romance, and in that fashionable species of composition which succeeded it, and which carries a nearer approximation to the manners of the world, the women cannot be excelled: this imaginary soil they have a peculiar talent for cultivating; because here,

Invention labours more, and judgment less.

The merit of this kind of writing consists in the *vraisemblance* to real life, as to the events themselves, with a certain elevation in the narrative, which places them, if not above what is natural, yet above what is common. It farther consists in the art of interesting the tender feelings, by a pathetic representation of those minute, endearing, domestic circumstances, which take captive the soul before it has time to shield itself with the armour of reflection. To amuse, rather than to instruct, or to instruct indirectly by short inferences, drawn from a long concatenation of circumstances, is at once the business of this sort of composition, and one of the characteristics of female genius.*

* The author does not apprehend it makes against her *general* position, that this nation can boast a female critic, poet, historian, linguist, philosopher, and moralist, equal to most of the other sex. To these particular instances others might be adduced; but it is presumed, that they only stand as exceptions against the rule, without tending to invalidate the rule itself.

In short, it appears that the mind in each sex has some natural kind of bias, which constitutes a distinction of character, and that the happiness of both depends, in a great measure, on the preservation and observance of this distinction. For where would be the superior pleasure and satisfaction resulting from mixed conversation, if this difference were abolished? If the qualities of both were invariably and exactly the same, no benefit or entertainment would arise from the tedious and insipid uniformity of such an intercourse; whereas considerable advantages are reaped from a select society of both sexes. The rough angles and asperities of male manners are imperceptibly filed, and gradually worn smooth, by the polishing of female conversation, and the refining of female taste; while the ideas of women acquire strength and solidity, by their associating with sensible, intelligent, and judicious men.

On the whole, (even if fame be the object of pursuit) is it not better to succeed as women, than to fail as men? To shine, by walking honorably in the road which nature, custom, and education seem to have marked out, rather than to counteract them all, by moving awkwardly in a path diametrically opposite? To be good originals, rather than bad imitators? In a word, to be excellent women, rather than indifferent men?

ON DISSIPATION.

Dolgie certe, allegrezze incerte!—*Petrarca.*

AS an argument in favour of modern manners it has been pleaded, that the softer vices of luxury and dissipation, belong rather to gentle and yielding tempers, than to such as are rugged and ferocious: that they are vices which increase civilization, and tend to promote refinement, and the cultivation of humanity.

But this is an assertion, the truth of which the experience of all ages contradicts. Nero was not less a tyrant for being a fiddler; he* who wished the whole Roman people had but one neck, that he might dispatch them at a blow, was himself the most debauched man in Rome; and Sydney and Russel were condemned to bleed under the most barbarous, though most dissipated and voluptuous reign that ever disgraced the annals of Britain.

The love of dissipation is, I believe, allowed to be the reigning evil of the present day. It is an evil which many content themselves with regretting, without seeking to redress. A dissipated life is censured in the very act of dissipation; and prodigality of time is as gravely declaimed against at the card table, as in the pulpit.

The lover of dancing censures the amusements of the theatre for their dulness, and the gamester blames them both for their levity. She, whose whole soul is swallowed up “*opera exta-*

* The emperor Caligula.

cies," is astonished, that her acquaintance can spend whole nights in preying, like harpies, on the fortunes of their fellow creatures, while the grave, sober sinner, who passes her pale and anxious vigils, in this fashionable sort of pillaging, is no less surprised how the other can waste her precious time in hearing sounds for which she has no taste, in a language she does not understand.

In short, every one seems convinced, that the evil so much complained of does really exist somewhere, though all are inwardly persuaded that it is not with themselves. All desire a general reformation; but few will listen to proposals of particular amendment; the body must be restored, but each limb begs to remain as it is; and accusations, which concern all, will be likely to affect none. They think that sin, like matter, is divisible, and that what is scattered among so many, cannot materially affect any one; and thus individuals contribute separately to that evil which they in general lament.

The prevailing manners of an age depend more than we are aware, or are willing to allow, on the conduct of the women; this is one of the principal hinges on which the great machine of human society turns. Those, who allow the influence which female graces have, in contributing to polish the manners of men, would do well to reflect how great an influence female morals must also have on their conduct. How much then is it to be regretted, that the ladies should ever sit down contented to polish, when they are able to reform—to entertain, when they might in-

struct—and to dazzle for an hour, when they are candidates for eternity!

Under the dispensation of Mahomet's law, indeed, these mental excellencies cannot be expected; because the women are shut out from all opportunities of instruction, and excluded from the endearing pleasures of a delightful and equal society; and, as a charming poet sings, are taught to believe, that

For their inferior natures
Form'd to delight, and happy by delighting,
Heav'n has reserv'd no future paradise,
But bids them rove the paths of bliss, secure
Of total death, and careless of hereafter.—*Irene.*

These act consistently, in studying none but exterior graces, in cultivating only personal attractions, and in trying to lighten the intolerable burden of time, by the most frivolous and vain amusements. They act in consequence of their own blind belief, and the tyranny of their despotic masters; for they have neither the freedom of a present choice, nor the prospect of a future being.

But in this land of civil and religious liberty, where there is as little despotism exercised over the minds, as over the persons of women, they have every liberty of choice, and every opportunity of improvement: and how greatly does this increase their obligation to be exemplary in their general conduct, attentive to the government of their families, and instrumental to the good order of society!

She who is at a loss to find amusements at home, can no longer apologize for her dissipa-

tion abroad, by saying she is deprived of the benefit and the pleasure of books; and she who regrets being doomed to a state of dark and gloomy ignorance, by the injustice, or tyranny of the men, complains of an evil which does not exist.

It is a question frequently in the mouths of illiterate and dissipated females—"What good is there in reading? To what end does it conduce?" It is, however, too obvious to need insisting on, that unless perverted, as the best things may be, reading answers many excellent purposes, besides the great leading one, and is perhaps the safest remedy for dissipation. She who dedicates a portion of her leisure to useful reading, feels her mind in a constant progressive state of improvement, while the mind of a dissipated woman is continually losing ground. An active spirit rejoiceth like the sun, to run his daily course, while indolence, like the dial of Ahaz, goes backwards. The advantages which the understanding receives from polite literature, it is not here necessary to enumerate; its effects on the moral temper is the present object of consideration. The remark may perhaps be thought too strong, but I believe it is true, that next to religious influences, an habit of study is the most probable preservative of the virtue of young persons. Those who cultivate letters have rarely a strong passion for promiscuous visiting, or dissipated society: study, therefore, induces a relish for domestic life, the most desirable temper in the world for women. Study, as it rescues the mind from an inordinate fondness

for gaming, dress, and public amusements, is an economical propensity; for a lady may read at much less expense than she can play at cards; as it requires some application, it gives the mind an habit of industry; as it is a relief against that mental disease, which the French emphatically call *ennui*, it cannot fail of being beneficial to the temper and spirits, I mean in the moderate degree in which ladies are supposed to use it; as an enemy to indolence, it becomes a social virtue; as it demands the full exertion of our talents, it grows a rational duty; and when directed to the knowledge of the Supreme Being, and his laws, it rises into an act of religion.

The rage for reformation commonly shews itself in a violent zeal for suppressing what is wrong, rather than a prudent attention to establish what is right: but we shall never obtain a fair garden merely by rooting up weeds; we must also plant flowers; for the natural richness of the soil we have been clearing will not suffer it to lie barren; but whether it shall be vainly or beneficially, prolific, depends on the culture. What the present age has gained on one side, by a more enlarged and liberal way of thinking, seems to be lost on the other, by excessive freedom and unbounded indulgence. Knowledge is not, as heretofore, confined to the dull cloyster, or the gloomy college, but disseminated, to a certain degree, among both sexes, and almost all ranks. The only misfortune is, that these opportunities do not seem to be so wisely improved, or turned to so good an account as might be wished. Books of a pernicious, idle, and frivo-

ious sort, are too much multiplied, and it is from the very redundancy of them, that true knowledge is so scarce, and the habit of dissipation so much increased.

It has been remarked, that the prevailing character of the present age is not that of gross immorality: but if this is meant of those in the higher walks of life, it is easy to discern, that there can be but little merit in abstaining from crimes which there is but little temptation to commit. It is, however, to be feared, that a gradual defection from piety will in time draw after it all the bad consequences of more active vice; for whether mounds and fences are suddenly destroyed by a sweeping torrent, or worn away through gradual neglect, the effect is equally destructive. As a rapid fever and a consuming hectic are alike fatal to our natural health, so are flagrant immorality and torpid indolence to our moral well being.

The philosophical doctrine of the slow recession of bodies from the sun, is a lively image of the reluctance with which we first abandon the light of virtue. The beginning of folly, and the first entrance on a dissipated life, cost some pangs to a well disposed heart; but it is surprising to see how soon the progress ceases to be impeded by reflection, or slackened by remorse. For it is in moral as in natural things; the motion in minds as well as bodies is accelerated by a nearer approach to the centre to which they are tending. If we recede slowly at first setting out, we advance rapidly in our future course: and to have begun to be wrong, is already to have made a great progress.

A constant habit of amusement relaxes the tone of the mind, and renders it totally incapable of application, study, or virtue. Dissipation not only indisposes its votaries to every thing useful and excellent, but disqualifies them for the enjoyment of pleasure itself. It softens the soul so much, that the most superficial employment becomes a labour, and the slightest inconvenience an agony. The luxurious Sybarite must have lost all sense of real enjoyment, and all relish for true gratification, before he complained that he could not sleep, because the rose-leaves lay double under him.

Luxury and dissipation, soft and gentle as their approaches are, and silently as they throw their silken chains about the heart, enslave it more than the most active and turbulent vices. The mightiest conquerors have been conquered by those unarmed foes: the flowery fetters are fastened before they are felt. The blandishments of Circe were more fatal to the mariners of Ulysses, than the strength of Polypheme, or the brutality of the Læstrigons. Hercules, after he had cleansed the Augean stable, and performed all the other labours enjoined him by Euristheus, found himself a slave to the softness of the heart; and he, who wore a club and a lion's skin in the cause of virtue, condescended to the most effeminate employments to gratify a criminal weakness. Hannibal, who vanquished mighty nations, was himself overcome by the love of pleasure; and he who despised cold, and want, and danger, and death on the Alps, was conquered and undone by the dissolute indulgences of Capua.

Before the hero of the most beautiful and virtuous romance that ever was written, I mean Telemachus, landed on the island of Cyprus, he unfortunately lost his prudent companion Mentor, in whom wisdom is so finely personified. At first he beheld with horror the wanton and dissolute manners of the voluptuous inhabitants: the ill effects of their example were not immediate: he did not fall into the commission of glaring enormities; but his virtue was secretly and imperceptibly undermined; his heart was softened by their pernicious society, and the nerve of resolution was slackened: he every day beheld with diminished indignation the worship which was offered to Venus; the disorders of luxury and prophaneness became less and less terrible, and the infectious air of the country enfeebled his courage, and relaxed his principles. In short, he had ceased to love virtue long before he thought of committing actual vice: and the duties of a manly piety were burdensome to him, before he was so debased as to offer perfumes, and burn incense on the altar of the licentious goddess.*

* Nothing can be more admirable than the manner in which this allegory is conducted; and the whole work, not to mention its images, machinery, and other poetical beauties, is written in the very finest strain of morality. In this latter respect, it is evidently superior to the works of the ancients, the moral of which is frequently tainted by the grossness of their mythology. Something of the purity of the Christian religion may be discovered even in Fenelon's heathens; and they catch a tincture of piety in passing through the hands of that amiable prelate.

“Let us crown ourselves with rose buds before they be withered,” said Solomon’s libertine. Alas! he did not reflect, that they withered in the very gathering. The roses of pleasure seldom last long enough to adorn the brow of him who plucks them; for they are the only roses which do not retain their sweetness after they have lost their beauty.

The heathen poets often pressed on their readers the necessity of considering the shortness of life, as an incentive to pleasure and voluptuousness; lest the season for indulging in them should pass unimproved. The dark and uncertain notions, not to say the absolute disbelief, which they entertained of a future state, is the only apology that can be offered for this reasoning.—But while we censure their tenets, let us not adopt their errors; errors which would be infinitely more inexcusable in us, who, from the clearer views which revelation has given us, shall not have their ignorance or their doubts to plead. It were well if we availed ourselves of that portion of their precept, which inculcates the improvement of every moment of our time, but not like them to dedicate the moments so redeemed to the pursuit of sensual and perishable pleasures, but to the securing of those which are spiritual in their nature, and eternal in their duration.

If, indeed, like the miserable* beings imagined by Swift, with a view to cure us of the irrational desire after immoderate length of days,

* The Struldburgs. See Voyage to Laputa.

we were condemned to a wretched earthly immortality, we should have an excuse for spending some portion of our time in dissipation, as we might then pretend, with some colour of reason, that we proposed, at a distant period, to enter on a better course of action. Or if we never formed any such resolution, it would make no material difference to beings, whose state was already unalterably fixed. But of the scanty portion of days assigned to our lot, not one should be lost in weak and irresolute procrastination.

Those who have not yet determined on the side of vanity, who, like Hercules, (before he knew the queen of Lydia, and had learned to spin) have not resolved on their choice between VIRTUE and PLEASURE, may reflect, that it is still in their power to imitate that hero in his noble choice, and in his virtuous rejection. They may also reflect with grateful triumph, that christianity furnishes them with a better guide than the tutor of Alcides and with a surer light than the doctrines of Pagan philosophy.

It is far from my design severely to condemn the innocent pleasures of life; I would only beg leave to observe, that those which are criminal should never be allowed; and that even the most innocent will, by immoderate use, soon cease to be so.

The women of this country were not sent into the world to shun society, but to embellish it; they were not designed for wilds and solitudes, but for the amiable and endearing offices of social life. They have useful stations to fill, and important characters to sustain. They are of a

religion which does not impose penances, but enjoins duties; a religion of perfect purity, but of perfect benevolence also; a religion which does not condemn its followers to indolent seclusion from the world, but assigns them the more dangerous, though more honourable province, of living uncorrupted in it. In fine, a religion, which does not direct them to fly from the multitude, that they may do nothing, but which positively forbids them to follow a multitude to do evil.

ON CONVERSATION.

IT has been advised, and by very respectable authorities too, that in conversation women should carefully conceal any knowledge or learning they may happen to possess. I own, with submission, that I do not see either the necessity or propriety of this advice. For if a young lady has that discretion and modesty, without which all knowledge is little worth, she will never make an ostentatious parade of it, because she will rather be intent on acquiring more, than on displaying what she has.

I am at a loss to know why a young female is instructed to exhibit, in the most advantageous point of view, her skill in music, her singing, dancing, taste in dress, and her acquaintance with the most fashionable games and amusements, while her piety is to be anxiously concealed, and her knowledge affectedly disavowed, lest the former should draw on her the appellation of an enthusiast, or the latter that of a pedant.

In regard to knowledge, why should she for ever affect to be on her guard, lest she should be found guilty of a small portion of it? She need be the less solicitous about it, as it seldom proves to be so very considerable as to excite astonishment or admiration: for, after all the acquisitions which her talents and her studies have enabled her to make, she will, generally speaking, be found to have less of what is called *learning*, than a common school-boy.

It would be to the last degree presumptuous and absurd, for a young woman to pretend to give

the *tone* to the company—to interrupt the pleasure of others, and her own opportunity of improvement, by talking when she ought to listen—or to introduce subjects out of the common road, in order to show her own wit, or to expose the want of it in others: but were the sex to be totally silent when any topic of literature happens to be discussed in their presence, conversation would lose much of its vivacity, and society would be robbed of one of its most interesting charms.

How easily and effectually may a well-bred woman promote the most useful and elegant conversation, almost without speaking a word! For the modes of speech are scarcely more variable than the modes of silence. The silence of listless ignorance, and the silence of sparkling intelligence, are perhaps as separately marked, and as distinctly expressed, as the same feelings could have been by the most unequivocal language. A woman, in a company where she has the least influence, may promote any subject by a profound and invariable attention, which shows that she is pleased with it, and by an illuminated countenance, which proves she understands it. This obliging attention is the most flattering encouragement in the world to men of sense and letters, to continue any topic of instruction or entertainment they happen to be engaged in: it owed its introduction perhaps to accident, the best introduction in the world for a subject of ingenuity, which, though it could not have been formally proposed without pedantry, may be continued with ease and good humour; but which will be frequently and effectually stopped by the listlessness, inattention, or

whispering of silly girls, whose weariness betrays their ignorance, and whose impatience exposes their ill-breeding. A polite man, however deeply interested in the subject on which he is conversing, catches at the slightest hint to have done: a look is a sufficient intimation, and if a pretty simpleton, who sits near him, seems *distracted*, he puts an end to his remarks to the great regret of the reasonable part of the company, who perhaps might have gained more improvement by the continuance of such a conversation, than a week's reading would have yielded them; for it is such company as this, that give an edge to each other's wit, "as iron sharpeneth iron."

That silence is one of the great arts of conversation, is allowed by Cicero himself, who says, there is not only an art, but even an eloquence in it. And this opinion is confirmed by a great modern,* in the following little anecdote from one of the ancients:

When many Grecian philosophers had a solemn meeting before the ambassador of a foreign prince, each endeavoured to show his parts by the brilliancy of his conversation, that the ambassador might have something to relate of the Grecian wisdom. One of them, offended, no doubt, at the loquacity of his companions, observed a profound silence; when the ambassador turning to him, asked, "But what have you to say, that I may report it?" He made this laconic, but very pointed reply: "Tell your king, that you have

* Lord Bacon.

found one among the Greeks who knew how to be silent."

There is a quality infinitely more intoxicating to the female mind than knowledge; this is wit, the most captivating, but the most dreaded of all talents: the most dangerous to those who have it, and the most feared by those who have it not. Though it is against all the rules, yet I cannot find in my heart to abuse this charming quality. He who is grown rich without it, in safe and sober dulness, shuns it as a disease, and looks upon poverty as its invariable concomitant. The moralist declaims against it, as the source of irregularity; and the frugal citizen dreads it more than bankruptcy itself; for he considers it as the parent of extravagance and beggary. The cynic will ask, of what use it is? Of very little, perhaps: no more is a flower garden, and yet it is allowed as an object of innocent amusement and delightful recreation. A woman who possesses this quality, has received a most dangerous present, perhaps not less so than beauty itself: especially if it be not sheathed in a temper peculiarly inoffensive, chastised by a most correct judgment, and restrained by more prudence than falls to the common lot.

This talent is more likely to make a woman vain than knowledge; for as wit is the immediate property of its possessor, and learning is only an acquaintance with the knowledge of other people, there is much more danger, that we should be vain of what is our own, than of what we borrow.

But wit, like learning, is not near so common a thing as is imagined. Let not, therefore, a young lady be alarmed at the acuteness of her own wit,

any more than at the abundance of her own knowledge. The great danger is, lest she should mistake pertness, flippancy, or imprudence, for this brilliant quality, or imagine she is witty, only because she is indiscreet. This is very frequently the case; and this makes the name of wit so cheap, while its real existence is so rare.

Lest the flattery of her acquaintance, or an overweening opinion of her own qualifications, should lead some vain and petulant girl into a false notion that she has a great deal of wit, when she has only a redundancy of animal spirits, she may not find it useless to attend to the definition of this quality, by one who had as large a portion of it, as most individuals could ever boast:

'Tis not a tale, 'tis not a jest,
Admir'd with laughter at a feast,
Nor florid talk, which can that title gain;
The proofs of wit for ever must remain.
Neither can that have any place,
At which a virgin hides her face;
Such dross the fire must purge away; 'tis just,
The author blush there, where the reader must.

But those who actually possess this rare talent, cannot be too abstinent in the use of it. It often makes admirers but it never makes friends; I mean, where it is the predominant feature: and the unprotected and defenceless state of womanhood, calls for friendship more than for admiration. She who does not desire friends, has a sordid and insensible soul; but she who is ambitious of making every man her admirer, has an invincible vanity, and a cold heart.

But to dwell only on the side of policy, a pru-

dent woman who has established the reputation of some genius, will sufficiently maintain it, without keeping her faculties always on the stretch, to say *good things*. Nay, if reputation alone be her object, she will gain a more solid one by her forbearance; as the wiser part of her acquaintance will ascribe it to the right motive, which is, not that she has less wit, but that she has more judgment.

The fatal fondness for indulging a spirit of ridicule, and the injurious and irreparable consequences which sometimes attend the *too prompt reply*, can never be too seriously or too severely condemned. Not to offend is the first step towards pleasing. To give pain is as much an offence against humanity, as against good breeding; and surely it is as well to abstain from an action, because it is sinful, as because it is unpolite. In company, young ladies would do well, before they speak, to reflect, if what they are going to say may not distress some worthy persons present, by wounding them in their persons, families, connexions, or religious opinions. If they find it will touch them in either of these, I would advise them to suspect, that what they are going to say, is not so *very* good a thing as they at first imagined. Nay, if even it was one of those bright ideas, which *Venus has imbued with a fifth part of her nectar*, so much greater will be their merit in suppressing it, if there was a probability it might offend. Indeed if they have the temper and prudence to make such a previous reflection, they will be more richly rewarded by their own inward triumph at having suppressed a lively

but severe remark, than they could have been with the dissembled applauses of the whole company, who, with that complaisant deceit which good breeding too much authorises, affect openly to admire what they secretly resolve never to forgive.

I have always been delighted with the story of the little girl's eloquence, in one of the children's tales, who received from a friendly fairy the gift, that at every word she uttered, pinks, roses, diamonds, and pearls, should drop from her mouth. The hidden moral appears to be this, that it was the sweetness of her temper which produced this pretty fanciful effect; for when her malicious sister desired the same gift from the good-natured tiny intelligence, the venom of her own heart converted it into poisonous and loathsome reptiles.

A man of sense and breeding will sometimes join in the laugh, which has been raised at his expense, by an ill-natured repartee: but if it was very cutting, and one of that shocking sort of truths, which, as they can scarcely be pardoned even in private, ought never to be uttered in public, he does not laugh because he is pleased, but because he wishes to conceal how much he is hurt. As the sarcasm was uttered by a lady, so far from seeming to resent it, he will be the first to commend it; but notwithstanding that he will remember it as a trait of malice, when the whole company shall have forgotten it as a stroke of wit. Women are so far from being privileged by their sex to say unhandsome or cruel things, that this is the very circumstance

which renders them more intolerable. When the arrow is lodged in the heart, it is no relief to him who is wounded, to reflect, that the hand which shot him was a fair one.

Many women, when they have a favorite point to gain, or an earnest wish to bring any one over to their opinion, often use a very disingenuous method: they will state a case ambiguously, and then avail themselves of it, in whatever manner shall best answer their purpose; leaving your mind in a state of indecision as to their real meaning, while they triumph in the perplexity they have given you, by the unfair conclusions they draw, from premises equivocally stated. They will also frequently argue from exceptions instead of rules, and are astonished when you are not willing to be contented with a prejudice, instead of a reason.

In a sensible company of both sexes, where women are not restrained by any other reserve than what their natural modesty imposes—and where the intimacy of all parties authorises the utmost freedom of communication—should any one enquire what were the general sentiments on some particular subjects, it will, I believe, commonly happen that the ladies, whose imaginations have kept pace with the narration, have anticipated its end, and are ready to deliver their sentiments on it, as soon as it is finished. While some of the male hearers, whose minds were busied in settling the propriety, comparing the circumstances, and examining the consistencies of what was said, are obliged to pause and discriminate, before they think of answering. No-

thing is so embarrassing as a variety of matter: and the conversation of women is often more perspicuous, because it is less labored.

A man of deep reflection, if he does not keep up an intimate commerce with the world, will be sometimes so entangled in the intricacies of intense thought, that he will have the appearance of a confused and perplexed expression; while a sprightly woman will extricate herself with that lively and "rash dexterity," which will almost always please though it is very far from being always right. It is easier to confound than to convince an opponent; the former may be effected by a turn that has more happiness than truth in it. Many an excellent reasoner, well skilled in the theory of the schools, has felt himself discomfited by a reply, which, though as wide of the mark, and as foreign to the question, as can be conceived, has disconcerted him more than the most startling proposition, or the most accurate chain of reasoning could have done; and he has borne the laugh of his fair antagonist, as well as of the whole company, though he could not but feel, that his own argument was attended with the fullest demonstration; so true it is, that it is not always necessary to be right, in order to be applauded.

But let not a young lady's vanity be too much elated with this false applause, which is given, not to merit, but to her sex; she has not, perhaps, gained a victory, though she may be allowed a triumph; and it should humble her to reflect, that the tribute is paid, not to her strength, but to her weakness. It is worth while to discri-

minate between that applause, which is given from the complaisance of others, and that which is paid to our own merit.

Where great sprightliness is the natural bent of the temper, girls should endeavour to habituate themselves to a custom of observing, thinking, and reasoning. I do not mean that they should devote themselves to abstruse speculation, or the study of logic; but she, who is accustomed to give a due arrangement to her thoughts, to reason justly and pertinently, on common affairs, and judiciously to deduce effects from their causes, will be a better logician than some of those who claim the name, because they have studied the art: this is being "learned without the rules;" the best definition, perhaps, of that sort of literature which is properest for the sex. That species of knowledge, which appears to be the result of reflection rather than of science, sits peculiarly well on women. It is not uncommon to find a lady, who, though she does not know a rule of syntax, scarcely ever violates one; and who constructs every sentence she utters, with more propriety than many a learned dunce, who has every rule of Aristotle by heart, and who can lace his own threadbare discourse with the golden shreds of Cicero and Virgil.

It has been objected, and I fear with some reason, that female conversation is too frequently tinctured with a censorious spirit, and that ladies are seldom apt to discover much tenderness for the errors of a fallen sister,

If it be so, it is a grievous fault.

No argument can justify, no pleas can extenuate it. To exult over the miseries of an unhappy creature, is inhuman: not to compassionate them, is unchristian. The worthy part of the sex always express themselves humanely on the failings of others, in proportion to their own undeviating goodness.

And here I cannot help remarking, that young women do not always carefully distinguish between running into the error of detraction, and its opposite extreme of indiscriminate applause. This proceeds from the false idea they entertain, that the direct contrary to what is wrong, must be right. Thus the dread of being only suspected of one fault, makes them actually guilty of another. The desire of avoiding the imputation of envy, impels them to be insincere; and to establish a reputation for sweetness of temper and generosity, they affect sometimes to speak of very indifferent characters with the most extravagant applause. With such the hyperbole is a favourite figure; and every degree of comparison, but the superlative, is rejected, as cold and inexpressive. But this habit of exaggeration greatly weakens their credit, and destroys the weight of their opinion on other occasions; for people very soon discover what degree of faith is to be given both to their judgment and veracity. And those of real merit will no more be flattered by that approbation, which cannot distinguish the value of what it praises, than the celebrated painter must have been at the judgment passed on his works by an ignorant spectator, who, being asked what he thought of such

very capital, but very different pieces, cried out in an affected rapture, "All alike! all alike!"

It has been proposed to the young, as a maxim of supreme wisdom, to manage so dexterously in conversation as to appear to be well acquainted with subjects, of which they are totally ignorant; and this, by affecting silence in regard to those, on which they are known to excel.—But why counsel this disingenuous fraud? Why add, to the numberless arts of deceit, this practice of deceiving, as it were, on a settled principle? If to disavow the knowledge they really have, be a culpable affectation, then certainly to insinuate an idea of their skill where they are actually ignorant, is a most unworthy artifice.

But of all the qualifications for conversation, humility, if not the most brilliant, is the safest, the most amiable, and the most feminine. The affectation of introducing subjects, with which others are unacquainted, and of displaying talents superior to the rest of the company, is as dangerous as it is foolish.

There are many, who never can forgive another for being more agreeable and more accomplished than themselves, and who can pardon any offence rather than an eclipsing merit. Had the nightingale in the fable conquered his vanity, and resisted the temptation of showing a fine voice, he might have escaped the talons of the hawk. The melody of his singing was the cause of his destruction; his merit brought him into danger, and his vanity cost him his life.

ON ENVY.

Envy came next—Envy with squinting eyes,
Sick of a strange disease, his neighbour's health ;
Best then he lives, when any better dies,
Is never poor but in another's wealth :

On best men's harms and griefs he feeds his fill,
Else his own maw doth eat with spiteful will ;
Ill must the temper be, where diet is so ill.

Fletcher's Purple Island.

“ENVY,” says Lord Bacon, “has no holidays.” There cannot, perhaps, be a more lively and striking description of the miserable state of mind those endure who are tormented with this vice. A spirit of emulation has been supposed to be the source of the greatest improvements ; and there is no doubt but the warmest rivalry will produce the most excellent effects ; but it is to be feared, that a perpetual state of contest will injure the temper so essentially, that the mischief will hardly be counterbalanced by any other advantages. Those, whose progress is the most rapid, will be apt to despise their less successful competitors, who, in return, will feel the bitterest resentment against their more fortunate rivals. Among persons of real goodness, this jealousy and contempt can never be equally felt : because every advancement in piety will be attended with a proportionable increase of humility, which will lead them to contemplate their own improvements with modesty, and to view with charity the miscarriages of others.

When an envious man is melancholy, one may ask him, in the words of Bion, what evil has befallen himself, or what good has happened to

another? This last is the scale by which he principally measures his felicity, and the very smiles of his friends are so many deductions from his own happiness. The wants of others are the standard by which he rates his own wealth; and he estimates his riches not so much by his own possessions, as by the necessities of his neighbours.

When the malevolent intend to strike a very deep, and dangerous stroke of malice, they generally begin the most remotely in the world, from the subject nearest their hearts. They set out with commending the object of their envy for some trifling quality or advantage, which it is scarcely worth while to possess: they next proceed to make a general profession of their own good will and regard for him; thus artfully removing any suspicion of their design, and clearing all obstructions for the insidious stab they are about to give: for who will suspect them of an intention to injure the object of their peculiar and professed esteem? the hearer's belief of the fact grows in proportion to the seeming reluctance with which it is told, and to the conviction he has, that the relater is not influenced by any private pique, or personal resentment; but that the confession is extorted from him sorely against his inclination, and purely on account of his zeal for truth,

Anger is less reasonable and more sincere than envy.—Anger breaks out abruptly; envy is a great prefacer: anger wishes to be understood at once; envy is fond of remote hints and ambiguities; but, obscure as its oracles are, it ne-

ver ceases to deliver them till they are perfectly comprehended; anger repeats the same circumstances over again; envy invents new ones at every fresh recital; anger gives a broken, vehement, and interrupted narrative; envy tells a more consistent and more probable, though a falser tale: anger is excessively imprudent; for it is impatient to disclose every thing it knows; envy is discreet; for it has a great deal to hide: anger never consults times or seasons: envy waits for the lucky moment, when the wound it meditates may be made the most exquisitely painful and the most incurably deep; anger uses more invective; envy does more mischief: simple anger soon runs itself out of breath, and is exhausted at the end of its tale; but it is for that chosen period that envy has treasured up the most barbed arrow in its whole quiver: anger puts a man out of himself; but the truly malicious generally preserve the appearance of self-possession, or they could not so effectually injure.—The angry man sets out by destroying his whole credit with you at once; for he very frankly confesses his abhorrence and detestation of the object of his abuse; while the envious man carefully suppresses all his own share in the affair.—The angry man defeats the end of his resentment, by keeping *himself* continually before your eyes, instead of his enemy; while the envious man artfully brings forward the object of his malice, and keeps himself out of sight.—The angry man talks loudly of his own wrongs; the envious of his adversary's injustice.—A passionate person, if his resentments are not complicated with malice, di-

vides his time between sinning and sorrowing; and as the irascible passions cannot constantly be at work, his heart may sometimes get a holiday.—Anger is a violent act, envy a constant habit:—no one can be always angry, but he may be always envious:—an angry man's enmity (if he be generous) will subside when the object of his resentment becomes unfortunate, but the envious man can extract food for his malice out of calamity itself, if he finds his adversary bears it with dignity, or is pitied or assisted in it. The rage of the passionate man is totally extinguished by the death of his enemy: but the hatred of the malicious is not buried even in the grave of his rival: he will envy the good name he has left behind him; he will envy him the tears of his widow, the prosperity of his children, the esteem of his friends, the praises of his epitaph—nay, the very magnificence of his funeral.

“The ear of jealousy heareth all things,”) says the wise man) frequently I believe more than is uttered, which makes the company of persons infected with it still more dangerous.

When you tell those of a malicious turn, any circumstance that has happened to another, though they perfectly know of whom you are speaking, they often affect to be at a loss, to forget his name, or to misapprehend you in some respect or other; and this, merely to have an opportunity of slyly gratifying their malice, by mentioning some unhappy defect or personal infirmity he labours under; and not contented, “to tack his every error to his name,” they will, by way of farther explanation, have recourse to

the faults of his father, or the misfortunes of his family; and this, with all the seeming simplicity and candour in the world, merely for the sake of preventing mistakes, and to clear up every doubt of his identity.— If you are speaking of a lady, for instance, they will perhaps embellish their enquires, by asking, if you mean her, whose great grandfather was a bankrupt, though she has the vanity to keep a chariot, while others who are much better born walk on foot; or they will afterwards recollect, that you may possibly mean her cousin, of the same name, whose mother was suspected of such or such an indiscretion, though the daughter had the luck to make her fortune by marrying, while her betters are overlooked.

To *hint at a fault*, does more mischief than speaking out; for whatever is left for the imagination to finish, will not fail to be overdone: every hiatus will be more than filled up, and every pause more than supplied. There is less malice, and less mischief too, in telling a man's name, than the initials of it; as a worthier person may be involved in the most disgraceful suspicions by such a dangerous ambiguity.

It is not uncommon for the envious, after having attempted to deface the fairest character so industriously, that they are afraid you will begin to detect their malice, to endeavour to remove your suspicions effectually, by assuring you, that, “ what they have just related is only the popular opinion; they themselves can never believe “ things are so bad as they are said to be; for “ their part, it is a rule with them always to hope

“the best. It is their way, never to believe or report ill of any one. They will, however, mention the story in all companies, that they may do their friend the service of protesting their disbelief of it.” More reputations are thus hinted away by false friends, than are openly destroyed by public enemies. An *if*, or a *but*, or a mortified look, or a languid defence, or an ambiguous shake of the head, or a hasty word affectedly recalled, will demolish a character more effectually, than the whole artillery of malice, when openly levelled against it.

It is not that envy never praises: No, that would be making a public profession of itself, and advertising its own malignity; whereas the greatest success of its efforts depends on the concealment of their end. When envy intends to strike a stroke of Machiavelian policy, it sometimes affects the language of the most exaggerated applause; though it generally takes care, that the subject of its panegyric shall be a very indifferent and common character, so that it is well aware none of its praises will stick.

It is the unhappy nature of envy not to be contented with positive misery, but to be continually aggravating its own torments, by comparing them with the felicities of others. The eyes of envy are perpetually fixed on the object which disturbs it, nor can it avert them from it, though to procure itself the relief of a temporary forgetfulness. On seeing the innocence of the first pair,

Aside the Devil turn'd,
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign,
Eyed them askance.

As this enormous sin chiefly instigated the revolt, and brought on the ruin, of the angelic spirits, so it is not improbable, that it will be principal instrument of misery in a future world, for the envious to compare their desperate condition with the happiness of the children of God, and to heighten their actual wretchedness by reflecting on what they have lost.

Perhaps envy, like lying and ingratitude, is practised with more frequency, because it is practised with impunity; but there being no human laws against these crimes, is so far from an inducement to commit them, that this very consideration would be sufficient to deter the wise and good, if all others were ineffectual; for how heinous a nature must those sins be, which are judged above the reach of human punishment, and are reserved for the final justice of God himself!

ON THE DANGER OF
SENTIMENTAL OR ROMANTIC
CONNEXIONS.

AMONG the many evils which prevail under the sun, the abuse of words is not the least considerable. By the influence of time, and the perversion of fashion, the plainest and most unequivocal may be so altered, as to have a meaning assigned them almost diametrically opposite to their original signification.

The present age may be termed, by way of distinction, the age of sentiment, a word, which, in the implication it now bears, was unknown to our plain ancestors. Sentiment is the varnish of virtue, to conceal the deformity of vice; and it is not uncommon for the same persons to make a jest of religion, to break through the most solemn ties and engagements, to practise every art of latent fraud and open seduction, and yet to value themselves on speaking and writing *sentimentally*.

But this refined jargon, which has infected letters, and tainted morals, is chiefly admired and adopted by *young ladies* of a certain turn, who read *sentimental books*, write *sentimental letters*, and contract *sentimental friendships*.

Error is never likely to do so much mischief, as when it disguises its real tendency, and puts on an engaging and attractive appearance. Many a young woman, who would be shocked at the

imputation of an intrigue, is extremely flattered at the idea of a sentimental connexion, though perhaps with a dangerous and designing man, who, by putting on this mask of plausibility and virtue, disarms her of her prudence, lays her apprehensions asleep, and involves her in misery—misery the more inevitable, because unsuspected. For she who apprehends no danger, will not think it necessary to be always upon her guard; but will rather invite than avoid the ruin, which comes under so specious and so fair a form.

Such an engagement will be infinitely dearer to her vanity, than an avowed and authorised attachment; for one of these sentimental lovers will not scruple very seriously to assure a credulous girl, that her unparalleled merit entitles her to the adoration of the whole world, and that the universal homage of mankind is nothing more than the unavoidable tribute extorted by her charms. No wonder then she should be so easily prevailed on to believe, that an individual is captivated by perfections which might enslave a million. But she should remember, that he, who endeavours to intoxicate her with adulation, intends one day most effectually to humble her. For an artful man has always a secret design to pay himself in future for every present sacrifice. And this prodigality of praise, which he now appears to lavish with such thoughtless profusion, is, in fact, a sum economically laid out to supply his future necessities: of this sum he keeps an exact estimate, and at some distant day promises himself the most exorbitant interest for it. If he

has address and conduct, and the object of his pursuit much vanity, and some sensibility, he seldom fails of success; for so powerful will be his ascendancy over her mind, that she will soon adopt his notions and opinions. Indeed it is more than probable she possessed most of them before, having gradually acquired them in her initiation into the sentimental character. To maintain that character with dignity and propriety, it is necessary she should entertain the most elevated ideas of disproportionate alliances, and disinterested love; and consider fortune, rank, and reputation, as mere chimerical distinctions, and vulgar prejudices.

r The lover, deeply versed in all the obliquities of fraud, and skilled to wind himself into every avenue of the heart, which indiscretion has left unguarded, soon discovers on which side it is most accessible. He avails himself of this weakness by addressing her in a language exactly consonant to her own ideas. He attacks her with her own weapons, and opposes rhapsody to sentiment. He professes so sovereign contempt for the paltry concerns of money, that she thinks it her duty to reward him for so generous a renunciation. Every plea he artfully advances of his own unworthiness, is considered by her as a fresh demand, which her gratitude must answer. And she makes it a point of honour to sacrifice to him that fortune which he is too noble to regard. These professions of humility are the common artifice of the vain; and these protestations of generosity the refuge of the rapacious. And among its many smooth mischiefs, it is one

of the sure and successful frauds of sentiment, to affect the most frigid indifference to those external and pecuniary advantages, which it is its great and real object to obtain.

A sentimental girl very rarely entertains any doubt of her personal beauty; for she has been daily accustomed to contemplate it herself, and to hear of it from others. She will not therefore be very solicitous for the confirmation of a truth so self evident; but she suspects, that her pretensions to understanding are more likely to be disputed, and, for that reason, greedily devours every compliment offered to those perfections, which are less obvious and more refined. She is persuaded that men need only open their eyes to decide on her beauty, while it will be the most convincing proof of the taste, sense, and elegance of her admirer, that he can discern and flatter those qualities in her. A man of the character here supposed, will easily insinuate himself into her affections, by means of this latent but leading foible which may be called the guiding clue to a sentimental heart. He will affect to overlook that beauty which attracts common eyes, and ensnares common hearts, while he will bestow the most delicate praises on the beauties of her mind, and finish the climax of adulation, by hinting that she is superior to it.

And when he tells her she hates flattery,
She says she does, being then most flatter'd.

But nothing, in general, can end less delightfully than these sublime attachments, even where no acts of seduction are ever practised, but they are suffered, like mere sublunary connexions, to

terminate in the vulgar catastrophe of marriage. That wealth, which lately seemed to be looked on with ineffable contempt by the lover, now appears to be the principal attraction in the eyes of the husband: and he, who but a few short weeks before, in a transport of sentimental generosity, wished her to have been a village maid, with no portion but her crook and her beauty, and that they might spend their days in pastoral love and innocence, has now lost all relish for the Arcadian life, or any other life in which she must be his companion.

On the other hand, she who was lately
Angel call'd, and angel-like ador'd,

is shocked to find herself at once stripped of all her celestial attributes. This late divinity, who scarcely yielded to her sisters of the sky, now finds herself of less importance in the esteem of the man she has chosen, than any other mere mortal woman. No longer is she gratified with the tear of counterfeited passion, the sigh of dissembled rapture, or the language of premeditated adoration. No longer is the altar of her vanity loaded with the oblations of fictitious fondness, the incense of falsehood, or the sacrifice of flattery.— Her apotheosis is ended! She feels herself degraded from the dignities and privileges of a goddess, to all the imperfections, vanities, and weaknesses of a slighted woman, and a neglected wife. Her faults which were so lately overlooked or mistaken for virtues, are now, as Cassius says, seen in a note-book. The passion, which was vowed eternal, lasted only a few short weeks; and the indifference, which was so far from being inclu-

ded in the bargain, that it was not so much as suspected, follows them through the whole tiresome journey of their insipid, vacant, joyless existence.

Thus much for the completion of the sentimental history. If we trace it back to its beginning, we shall find, that a damsel of this cast had her head originally turned by pernicious reading, and her insanity confirmed by imprudent friendships. She never fails to select a beloved confidante of her own turn and humour, though, if she can help it, not quite so handsome as herself. A violent intimacy ensues, or, to speak the language of sentiment, an intimate union of souls immediately takes place, which is wrought to the highest pitch, by a secret and voluminous correspondence, though they live in the same street, or perhaps in the same house. This is the fuel which principally feeds and supplies the dangerous flame of sentiment. In this correspondence the two friends encourage each other in the falsest notions imaginable. They represent romantic love as the great important business of human life, and describe all the other concerns of it as too low and paltry to merit the attention of such elevated beings, and fit only to employ the daughters of the plodding vulgar. In these letters, family affairs are misrepresented, family secrets divulged, and family misfortunes aggravated. They are filled with vows of eternal amity, and protestations of never-ending love. But interjections and quotations are the principal embellishments of these very sublime epistles. Every panegyric contained in them is extravagant and

hyperbolic, every censure exaggerated and excessive. In a favourite, every frailty is heightened into a perfection, and in a foe, degraded into a crime. The dramatic poets, especially the most tender and romantic, are quoted in almost every line, and every pompous or pathetic thought is forced to give up its natural and obvious meaning, and, with all the violence of misapplication, is compelled to suit some circumstance of imaginary woe of the fair transcriber. Alicia is not too mad for her heroics, nor Monimia too mild for her soft emotions.

Fathers *have flinty hearts*, is an expression worth an empire, and is always used with peculiar emphasis and enthusiasm. For a favorite topic of these epistles is the groveling spirit and sordid temper of the parents, who will be sure to find no quarters at the hands of their daughters, should they presume to be so unreasonable as to direct their course of reading, interfere in their choice of friends, or interrupt their very important correspondence. But as these young ladies are fertile in expedients, and as their genius is never more agreeably exercised than in finding resources, they are not without their secret exultation, in case either of the above interesting events should happen, as they carry with them a certain air of tyranny and persecution which is very delightful. For a prohibited correspondence is one of the great incidents of sentimental life—and a letter clandestinely received, the supreme felicity of a sentimental lady.

Nothing can equal the astonishment of these

soaring spirits, when their plain friends or prudent relations presume to remonstrate with them on any impropriety in their conduct. But if these worthy people happen to be somewhat advanced in life, their contempt is then a little softened by pity, at the reflection that such very antiquated, poor creatures should pretend to judge what is fit or unfit for ladies of their great refinement, sense, and reading. They consider them as wretches utterly ignorant of the sublime pleasures of a delicate and exalted passion; as tyrants whose authority is to be condemned, and as spies whose vigilance is to be eluded. The prudence of these worthy friends they term suspicion, and their experience dotage. For they are persuaded, that the face of things has so totally changed, since their parents were young, that though they might then judge tolerably for themselves yet they are now (with all their advantage of knowledge and observation) by no means qualified to direct their more enlightened daughters; who, if they have made a great progress in the sentimental walk, will be no more influenced by the advice of their mother, than they would go abroad in her laced pinner, or her brocade suit.

But young people never show their folly and ignorance more conspicuously, than by this overconfidence in their own judgment, and this haughty disdain of the opinion of those who have known more days.—Youth has a quickness of apprehension, which it is very apt to mistake for an acuteness of penetration. But youth, like cunning, though very conceited, is very short-sight-

ed, and never more so than when it disregards the instructions of the wise, and the admonitions of the aged. The same vices and follies influenced the human heart in their day, which influence it now, and nearly in the same manner. One who well knew the world and its various vanities, has said, "The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."

It is also a part of the sentimental character, to imagine that none but the young and the beautiful have any right to the pleasures of society, or even to the common benefits and blessings of life. Ladies of this turn also affect the most lofty disregard for useful qualities and domestic virtues; and this is a natural consequence; for as this sort of sentiment is only a word for idleness, she who is constantly and usefully employed, has neither leisure nor propensity to cultivate it.

A sentimental lady principally values herself on the enlargement of her notions, and her liberal way of thinking. This superiority of soul chiefly manifests itself in the contempt of these minute delicacies and little decorums, which, trifling as they may be thought, tend at once to dignify the character, and to restrain the levity of the younger part of the sex.

Perhaps the error here complained of, originates in mistaking *sentiment* and *principle* for each other. Now I conceive them to be extremely different. Sentiment is the virtue of *ideas*, and principle the virtue of *action*. Sentiment has its seat in the head, principle in the heart. Senti-

ment suggests fine harangues and subtile distinctions; principle conceives just notions, and performs good actions in consequence of them. Sentiment refines away the simplicity of truth and the plainness of piety; and, as a celebrated wit* has remarked of his no less celebrated contemporary, gives us virtue in words and vice in deeds. Sentiment may be called the Athenian who *knew* what was right, and principle, the Lacedemonian who *practised* it.

But these qualities will be better exemplified by an attentive consideration of two admirably drawn characters of Milton, which are beautifully, delicately, and distinctly marked. These are Belial, who may not improperly be called the *demon of sentiment*, and Abdiel, who may be termed the *angel of principle*.

Survey the picture of Belial, drawn by the sublimest hand that ever held the poetic pencil.

A fairer person lost not heav'n: he seem'd
 For dignity compos'd, and high exploit;
 But all was false and hollow—though his tongue
 Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
 The better reason, to perplex and dash
 Maturest counsels; for his thoughts were low;
 To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
 Tim'rous and slothful; yet he pleas'd the ear.

Paradise Lost, B. II.

Here is a lively and exquisite representation of art, subtilty, wit, fine breeding, and polished manners: on the whole, of a very accomplished and sentimental spirit.

* See Voltaire's Prophecy concerning Rousseau.

Now turn to the artless, upright, and unsophisticated Abdiel.

Faithful found—

Among the faithless, faithful only he—

Among innumerable false, unmov'd,

Unshaken, uneduc'd, untterrifyd;

His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal.

Nor number, nor example with him wrought

To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind

Though single.

BOOK V.

But it is not from these descriptions, just and striking as they are, that their characters are so perfectly known, as from an examination of their conduct through the remainder of this divine work; in which it is well worth while to remark the consonancy of their actions, with what the above pictures seem to promise. It will also be observed, that the contrast between them is kept up throughout, with the utmost exactness of delineation, and the most animated strength of colouring. On a review it will be found, that *Belial talked all*, and *Abdiel did all*. The former,

With words still cloth'd in reason's guise,

Counsell'd ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,

Not peace.

BOOK II.

In Abdiel we will constantly find the eloquence of action. When tempted by the rebellious angels, with what *retorted scorn*, with what honest indignation he deserts their multitudes, and retreats from their contagious society!

All night the dreadless angel unpursu'd

Through heav'n's wide champaign held his way.

BOOK VI.

No wonder he was received with such acclamations of joy by the celestial powers, when there was

But one,
Yes, of so many myriads fall'n, but one
Return'd not lost.

IBID.

And afterwards, in a close contest with the
arch-fiend,

A noble stroke he lifted high,
On the proud crest of Satan.

IBID.

What was the effect of this courage of the
vigilant and active seraph?

Amazement seiz'd
The rebel thrones, but greater rage to see
Thus foil'd their mightiest.

Abdiel had the superiority of Belial as much in
the warlike combat, as in the peaceful counsels.

Nor was it aught but just,
That he, who in debate of truth had won,
Should win in arms—in both disputes alike
Victor.

But notwithstanding I have spoken with some
asperity against sentiment, as opposed to princi-
ple, yet I am convinced, that true genuine senti-
ment (not the sort I have been describing) may
be so connected with principle, as to bestow on
it its brightest lustre, and its most captivating
graces. And enthusiasm is so far from being
disagreeable, that a portion of it is perhaps in-
dispensably necessary in an engaging woman.
But it must be the enthusiasm of the heart, not
of the senses. It must be the enthusiasm which
grows up with a feeling mind, and is cherished
by a virtuous education—not that which is com-
pounded of irregular passions, and artificially
refined by books of unnatural fiction and impro-
bable adventure. I will even go so far as to assert,
that a young woman cannot have any real great-

ness of soul, or true elevation of principle, if she has not a tincture of what the vulgar would call romance, but which persons of a certain way of thinking will discern to proceed from those fine feelings, and that charming sensibility, without which, though a woman may be worthy, yet she can never be amiable.

But this dangerous merit cannot be too rigidly watched, as it is very apt to lead those who possess it into inconveniencies from which less interesting characters are happily exempt.—Young women of strong sensibility may be carried by the very amiableness of this temper, into the most alarming extremes. Their tastes are passions. They love and hate with all their hearts, and scarcely suffer themselves to feel a reasonable preference before it strengthens into a violent attachment.

When an innocent girl, of this open, trusting, tender heart, happens to meet with one of her own sex and age, whose address and manners are engaging, she is instantly seized with an ardent desire to commence a friendship with her. She feels the most lively impatience at the restraints of company, and the decorums of ceremony. She longs to be alone with her, longs to assure her of the warmth of her tenderness, and generously ascribes to the fair stranger all the good qualities she feels in her own heart, or rather all those which she has met with, in her reading, dispersed in a variety of heroines. She is persuaded, that her new friend unites them all in herself, because she carries in her prepossessing countenance the promise of them all.

How cruel and how censorious would this inexperienced girl think her mother was, who should venture to hint, that the agreeable unknown had defects in her temper, or exceptions in her character! She should mistake these hints of discretion for the insinuations of an uncharitable disposition. At first she would perhaps listen to them with a generous impatience, and afterwards with a cold and silent disdain. She would despise them as the effect of prejudice, misrepresentation, or ignorance. The more aggravated the censure, the more vehemently would she protest in secret, that her friendship for this dear injured creature (who is raised much higher in her esteem by such injurious suspicions) shall know no bounds, as she is assured it can know no end.

Yet this trusting confidence, this honest indiscretion, is, at this early period of life, as amiable as it is natural; and will, if wisely cultivated, produce, at its proper season, fruits infinitely more valuable than all the guarded circumspection of premature, and therefore artificial prudence. Men, I believe, are seldom struck with these sudden prepossessions in favour of each other. They are not so unsuspecting, nor so easily led away by the predominance of fancy. They engage more warily, and pass through the several stages of acquaintance, intimacy, and confidence, by slower gradations; but women, if they are sometimes deceived in the choice of a friend, enjoy even then an higher degree of satisfaction, than if they never trusted. For to be always clad in the burdensome armour of suspi-

cion, is more painful and inconvenient, than to run the hazard of suffering now and then a transient injury.

But the above observations only extend to the young and the inexperienced; for I am very certain, that women are capable of as faithful and as durable friendship as any of the other sex. They can enter not only into all the enthusiastic tenderness, but into all the solid fidelity of attachment. And if we cannot oppose instances of equal weight with those of Nysus and Euryalus, Theseus and Pirithous, Pylades and Orestes, let it be remembered, that it is because the recorders of those characters were men, and that the very existence of them is merely poetical.

ON TRUE AND FALSE MEEKNESS.

A LOW voice and a soft address are the common indications of a well bred woman, and should seem to be the natural effects of a meek and quiet spirit: but they are only the outward and visible signs of it; for they are no more meekness itself, than a red coat is courage, or a black one devotion.

Yet nothing is more common than to mistake the sign for the thing itself; nor is any practice more frequent, than that of endeavouring to acquire the exterior mark, without once thinking to labour after the interior grace. Surely this is beginning at the wrong end, like attacking the symptom, and neglecting the disease. To regulate the features, while the soul is in tumults, or to command the voice, while the passions are without restraint, is as idle as throwing odours into a stream when the source is polluted.

The *sapient king*, who knew better than any man the nature and power of beauty, has assured us, that the temper of the mind has a strong influence upon the features; "Wisdom maketh the face to shine," says that exquisite judge: and surely no part of wisdom is more likely to produce this amiable effect, than a placid serenity of soul.

It will not be difficult to distinguish the true from the artificial meekness. The former is universal and habitual; the latter, local and temporary. Every young female may keep this rule by her, to enable her to form a just judgment of

her own temper: if she is not as gentle to her chambermaid, as she is to her visitor, she may rest satisfied, that the spirit of gentleness is not in her.

Who would not be shocked and disappointed to behold the well-bred young lady, soft and engaging as the doves of Venus, displaying a thousand graces and attractions to win the hearts of a large company—and the instant they are gone, to see her look mad as the Pythian maid, and all the frightened graces driven from her furious countenance, only because her gown was brought home a quarter of an hour later than she expected, or her riband sent half a shade lighter or darker than she ordered?

All men's characters are said to proceed from their servants; and this is more particularly true of ladies: for as their situation are more domestic, they lie more open to the inspection of their families, to whom their real characters are easily and perfectly known; for they seldom think it worth while to practise any disguise before those, whose good opinion they do not value, and who are obliged to submit to their most insupportable humours, because they are paid for it.

Among women of breeding, the exterior of gentleness is so uniformly assumed, and the whole manner is so perfectly level and *uni*, that it is next to impossible for a stranger to know any thing of their true dispositions by conversing with them: and even the very features are so exactly regulated, that physiognomy, which

may sometimes be trusted among the vulgar, is, with the polite, a most lying science.

A very termagant woman, if she happens also to be a very artful one, will be conscious she has so much to conceal, that the dread of betraying her real temper, will make her put on an over-acted softness, which, from its very excess, may be distinguished from the natural by a penetrating eye. That gentleness is ever liable to be suspected for the counterfeited, which is so excessive as to deprive people of the proper use of speech, and motion, or which, as Hamlet says, makes them lisp and amble, and nick-name God's creatures.

The countenance and manners of some very fashionable persons may be compared to the inscriptions on their monuments, which speak nothing but good of what is within; but he who knows any thing of the world, or of the human heart, will no more trust to the countenance than he will depend on the epitaph.

Among the various artifices of factitious meekness, one of the most frequent and most plausible, is that of affecting to be always equally delighted with all persons and all characters. The society of these languid beings is without confidence; their friendship without attachment; and their love without affection, or even preference. This insipid mode of conduct may be safe; but I cannot think it has either taste, sense or principle in it.

These uniformly smiling and approving ladies, who have neither the noble courage to reprehend vice, nor the generous warmth to bear their ho-

nest testimony in the cause of virtue, conclude every one to be ill-natured who has any penetration, and look upon a distinguishing judgment as want of tenderness. But they should learn, that this discernment does not always proceed from an uncharitable temper, but from that long experience and thorough knowledge of the world which lead those who have it, to scrutinize into the conduct and disposition of men, before they trust entirely to those fair appearances which sometimes veil the most insidious purposes.

We are perpetually mistaking the qualities and dispositions of our own hearts. We elevate our failings into virtues, and qualify our vices into weaknesses: and hence arise so many false judgments respecting meekness. Self-ignorance is at the root of all this mischief. Many ladies complain, that, for their part, their spirit is so meek that they can bear nothing; whereas, if they spoke truth, they would say, their spirit is so high and unbroken, that they can bear nothing. Strange! to plead their meekness as a reason why they cannot endure to be crossed, and to produce their impatience of contradiction, as a proof of their gentleness.

Meekness, like most other virtues, has certain limits, which it no sooner exceeds, than it becomes criminal. Servility of spirit is not gentleness, but weakness; and if allowed, under the specious appearances it sometimes puts on, will lead to the most dangerous compliances. She who hears innocence maligned without vindicating it, falsehood asserted without contradicting

it, or religion prophaned without resenting it, is not gentle, but wicked.

To give up the cause of an innocent injured friend, if the popular cry happens to be against him, is the most disgraceful weakness. This was the case of madame de Maintenon. She loved the character and admired the talents of Racine; she caressed him while he had no enemies, but wanted the greatness of mind, or rather the common justice, to protect him against their resentment, when he had; and her favourite was abandoned to the suspicious jealousy of the king, when a prudent remonstrance might have preserved him. But her tameness, if not absolute connivance, in the great massacre of the protestants, in whose church she had been bred, is a far more guilty instance of her weakness; an instance which, in spite of all her devotional zeal and incomparable prudence, will disqualify her from shining in the annals of good women, however she may be entitled to figure among the great and the fortunate. Compare her conduct with that of her undaunted and pious countryman and contemporary, Bougi, who, when Louis would have prevailed on him to renounce his religion for a commission or a government, nobly replied, "If I could be persuaded to betray my God for a marshal's staff, I might betray my king for a bribe of much less consequence."

Meekness is imperfect if it be not both active and passive—if it will not enable us to subdue, our own passions and resentments, as well as qualify us to bear patiently the passions and resentments of others.

Before we give way to any violent emotion of anger, it would, perhaps, be worth while to consider the value of the object which excites it, and to reflect for a moment, whether the thing we so ardently desire, or so vehemently resent, be really of as much importance to us, as that delightful tranquillity of soul, which we renounce in pursuit of it. If, on a fair calculation, we find we are not likely to get as much as we are sure to lose, then putting all religious considerations out of the question, common sense and human policy will tell us, we have made a foolish and unprofitable exchange. Inward quiet is a part of one's self; the object of our resentment may be only a matter of opinion; and certainly, what makes a portion of our actual happiness ought to be too dear to us, to be sacrificed for a trifling, foreign, perhaps imaginary good.

The most pointed satire I remember to have read, on a mind enslaved by anger, is an observation of Seneca's: "Alexander," said he, "had two friends, Clitus and Lysimachus; the one he exposed to a lion, the other to himself: he who was turned loose to the beast escaped; but Clitus was murdered: for he was turned loose to an angry man."

A passionate woman's happiness is never in her own keeping: it is the sport of accident, and the slave of events. It is in the power of her acquaintance, her servants, but chiefly of her enemies; and all her comforts lie at the mercy of others. So far from being willing to learn of him who was meek and lowly, she considers meekness as the want of a becoming

spirit, and lowliness as a despicable and vulgar meanness.—And an imperious woman will so little covet the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, that it is almost the only ornament she will not be solicitous to wear. But resentment is a very expensive vice. How dearly has it cost its votaries, even from the sin of Cain, the first offender in this kind! “It is cheaper (says a pious writer) to forgive, and save the charges.”

If it were only for mere human reasons, it would turn to a better account to be patient: nothing defeats the malice of an enemy like a spirit of forbearance: the return of rage for rage cannot be so effectually provoking. True gentleness, like an impenetrable armour, repels the most pointed shafts of malice: they cannot pierce through this invulnerable shield, but either fall hurtless to the ground, or return, to wound the hand that shot them.

A meek spirit will not look out of itself for happiness, because it finds a constant banquet at home: yet, by a sort of divine alchymy, it will convert all external events to its own profit, and be able to deduce some good, even from the most unpromising; it will extract comfort and satisfaction from the most barren circumstances: “It will suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.”

But the supreme excellence of this complacent quality, is, that it naturally disposes the mind where it resides, to the practice of every other that is amiable.—Meekness may be called the pioneer of all the other virtues, which levels every obstruction, and smooths every difficulty

that might impede their entrance, or retard their progress.

The peculiar importance and value of this amiable virtue may be further seen in its permanency. Honours and dignities are transient—beauty and riches frail and fugacious, to a proverb. Would not the truly wise, therefore, wish to have some one possession which they might call their own in the severest exigencies? But this wish can only be accomplished by acquiring and maintaining that calm and absolute self-possession, which, as the world had no hand in giving, so it cannot, by the most malicious exertion of its power, take away.

Thoughts on the cultivation of the heart and temper in the education of daughters.

I HAVE not the foolish presumption to imagine, that I can offer any thing new on a subject which has been so successfully treated by many learned and able writers. I would only, with all possible deference, beg leave to hazard a few short remarks on that part of the subject of education, which I would call the *education of the heart*. I am well aware, that this part also has not been less skilfully and forcibly discussed than the rest, though I cannot, at the same time, help remarking, that it does not appear to have been so much adopted into common practice.

It appears then, that notwithstanding the great and real improvements, which have been made in the affair of female education, and notwithstanding the more enlarged and generous views of it which prevail in the present day, there is still a very material defect, which it is not, in general, enough the object of attention to remove. This defect seems to consist in this, that too little regard is paid to the disposition of the *mind*; that the indications of the *temper* are not properly cherished: nor the affections of the *heart* sufficiently regulated

In the first education of girls, as far as the customs, which fashion establishes, are right, they should undoubtedly be followed. Let the exterior be made a considerable object of attention; but let it not be the principal, let it not be the only one. Let the graces be industriously cultivated:

but let them not be cultivated at the expense of the virtues.—Let the arms, the head, the whole person be carefully polished; but let not the heart be the only portion of the human anatomy, which shall be totally overlooked.

The neglect of this cultivation seems to proceed as much from a bad taste, as from a false principle. The generality of people form their judgment of education by slight and sudden appearances, which is certainly a wrong way of determining. Music, dancing, and languages, gratify those who teach them, by perceptible and almost immediate effects; and when there happens to be no imbecility in the pupil, nor deficiency in the master, every superficial observer can, in some measure, judge of the progress. The effects of most of these accomplishments address themselves to the senses: and there are more who can see and hear, than there are who can judge and reflect.

Personal perfection is not only more obvious, it is also more rapid: and even in very accomplished characters, elegance usually precedes principle.

But the heart, that natural seat of evil propensities, that little troublesome empire of the passions, is led to what is right by slow motions and imperceptible degrees. It must be admonished by reproof and allured by kindness. Its liveliest advances are frequently impeded by the obstinacy of prejudice, and its brightest promises often obscured by the tempests of passion. It is slow in its acquisition of virtue, and reluctant in its approaches to piety.

There is another reason, which proves this mental cultivation to be more important, as well as more difficult, than any other part of education. In the usual fashionable accomplishments, the business of acquiring them is almost always getting forwards, and one difficulty is conquered before another is suffered to show itself; for a prudent teacher will level the road his pupil is to pass, and smooth the inequalities which might retard her progress.

But in morals, (which should be the great object constantly kept in view) the task is far more difficult. The unruly and turbulent desires of the heart are not so obedient; one passion will start up before another is suppressed. The subduing Hercules cannot cut off the heads so often as the prolific Hydra can produce them, nor fell the stubborn Antæus, so fast as he can recruit his strength, and rise in vigorous and repeated opposition.

If all the accomplishments could be bought at the price of a single virtue, the purchase would be infinitely dear! And, however startling it may sound, I think it is, notwithstanding, true, that the labours of a good and wise mother, who is anxious for her daughter's most important interests, will seem to be at variance with those of her instructors. She will, doubtless, rejoice at her progress in any polite art: but she will rejoice with trembling:—humility and piety form the solid and durable basis, on which she wishes to raise the superstructure of the accomplishments; while the accomplishments themselves are fre-

quently of such an unsteady nature, that if the foundation is not secured, in proportion as the building is enlarged, it will be overloaded and destroyed by those very ornaments which were intended to embellish what they have contributed to ruin.

The more ostensible qualifications should be carefully regulated, or they will be in danger of putting to flight the modest train of retreating virtues, which cannot safely subsist before the bold eye of public observation, or bear the bolder tongue of impudent and audacious flattery. A tender mother cannot but feel an honest triumph, in contemplating those excellencies in her daughter which deserve applause; but she will also shudder at the vanity which that applause may excite, and at those hitherto unknown ideas which it may awaken.

The master, (it is his interest, and perhaps his duty,) will naturally teach a girl to set her improvements in the most conspicuous point of light. *Se faire valoir* is the great principle industriously inculcated into her young heart, and seems to be considered as a kind of fundamental maxim in education. It is, however, the certain and effectual seed, from which a thousand yet unborn vanities will spring. This dangerous doctrine (which yet is not without its uses) will be counteracted by the prudent mother, not in so many words, but by a watchful and scarcely perceptible dexterity. Such a one will be more careful to have the talents of her daughter *cultivated*, than *exhibited*.

One would be led to imagine, by the common mode of female education, that life consisted of

one universal holiday, and that the only contest was, who should be best enabled to excel in the sports and games that were to be celebrated on it. Merely ornamental accomplishments will but indifferently qualify a woman to perform the *duties* of life, though it is highly proper she should possess them, in order to furnish the *amusements* of it. But is it right to spend so large a portion of life without some preparation for the business of living? A lady may speak a little French and Italian, repeat a few passages in a theatrical tone, play and sing, have her dressing-room hung with her own drawings, and her person covered with her own tambour work, and may, notwithstanding, have been very *badly educated*. Yet I am far from attempting to depreciate the value of these qualifications: they are most of them not only highly becoming, but often indispensably necessary; and a polite education cannot be perfected without them. But as the world seems to be very well apprised of their importance, there is the less occasion to insist on their utility. Yet, though well bred young women should learn to dance, sing, recite, and draw, the end of a good education is not, that they may become dancers, singers, players, or painters; its real object is, to make them good daughters, good wives, good mistresses, good members of society, and good christians. The above qualifications, therefore, are intended to *adorn* their *leisure*, not to *employ* their *lives*; for an amiable and wise woman will always have something better to value herself on, than these advantages, which, however captiva-

ting, are still but subordinate parts of a truly excellent character.

But I am afraid parents themselves sometimes contribute to the error of which I am complaining. Do they not often set a higher value on those acquisitions which are calculated to attract observation, and catch the eye of the multitude, than on those which are valuable, permanent, and internal? Are they not sometimes more solicitous about the opinion of others, respecting their children, than about the real advantage and happiness of the children themselves? To an injudicious and superficial eye, the best educated girl may make the least brilliant figure, as she will probably have less flippancy in her manner, and less repartée in her expression; and her acquirements, to borrow bishop Sprat's idea, will be rather enamelled than embossed. But her merit will be known and acknowledged by all who come near enough to discern, and have taste enough to distinguish. It will be understood and admired by the man whose happiness she is one day to make, whose family she is to govern, and whose children she is to educate. He will not seek for her in the haunts of dissipation; for he knows he shall not find her there; but he will seek for her in the bosom of retirement, in the practice of every domestic virtue, in the exercise of every amiable accomplishment, exerted in the shade, to enliven retirement, to heighten the endearing pleasures of social intercourse, and to embellish the narrow circle of family delights. To this amiable purpose, a truly good and well educated young lady will dedicate the more ele-

gant accomplishments, instead of exhibiting them to attract admiration, or depress inferiority.

Young girls, who have more vivacity than understanding, will often make a sprightly figure in conversation. But this agreeable talent for entertaining others, is frequently dangerous to themselves, nor is it by any means to be desired or encouraged very early in life. This immaturity of wit is helped on by frivolous reading, which will produce its effect in much less time than books of solid instruction: for the imagination is touched sooner than the understanding; and effects are more rapid as they are more pernicious. Conversation should be the *result* of education, not the *precursor* of it. It is a golden fruit, when suffered to grow gradually on the tree of knowledge; but if precipitated by forced and unnatural means, it will in the end become vapid, in proportion as it is artificial.

The best effects of a careful and religious education are often very remote: they are to be discovered in future scenes, and exhibited in untried connexions. Every event of life will be putting the heart into fresh situations, and making demands on its prudence, its firmness, its integrity, or its piety. Those, whose business it is to form it, can foresee none of these situations: yet, as far as human wisdom will allow, they must enable it to provide for them all, with an humble dependence on the divine assistance. A well-disciplined soldier must learn and practise all his evolutions, though he does not know on what service his leader may command him. by

what foe he shall be attacked, nor what mode of combat the enemy may use.

One great art of education consists in not suffering the feelings to become too acute by unnecessary awakening, nor too obtuse by the want of exertion. The former renders them the source of calamity, and ruins the temper: while the latter blunts and debases them, and produces a dull, cold, and selfish spirit. For the mind is an instrument, which, if wound too high, will lose its sweetness, and if not enough strained, will abate of its vigor.

How cruel is it to extinguish, by neglect or unkindness, the precious sensibility of an open temper, to chill the amiable glow of an ingenuous soul, and to quench the bright flame of a noble and generous spirit: These are of higher worth than all the documents of learning, of dearer price than all the advantages, which can be derived from the most refined and artificial mode of education.

But sensibility and delicacy, and an ingenuous temper make no part of education, exclaims the pedagogue—they are reducible to no class—they come under no article of instruction—they belong neither to languages nor to music. What an error? They are a part of education, and of infinitely more value,

Than all their pedant discipline e'er knew.

It is true, they are ranged under no class, but they are superior to all; they are of more esteem than languages or music; for they are the language of the heart, and the music of the accompanying passions. Yet this sensibility is in many in-

stances, so far from being cultivated, that it is not uncommon to see those who affect more than usual sagacity, cast a smile of supercilious pity, at any indication of a warm, generous, or enthusiastic temper in the lively and the young: as much as to say, "they will know better, and will have "more discretion, when they are older." But every appearance of amiable simplicity, or of honest shame, *Nature's hasty conscience*, will be dear to sensible hearts; they will carefully cherish every such indication in a young female: for they will perceive, that it is this temper, wisely cultivated, which will one day make her enamoured of the loveliness of virtue, and the beauty of holiness; from which she will acquire a taste for the doctrines of religion, and a spirit to perform the duties of it. And those, who wish to make her ashamed of this charming temper, and seek to dispossess her of it, will, it is to be feared, give her nothing better in exchange. But whoever reflects at all, will easily discern how judiciously its redundancies are to be lopped away.

Prudence is not natural to children; they can, however, substitute art in its stead. But is it not much better, that a girl should discover the faults incident to her age, than conceal them under this dark and impenetrable veil? I could almost venture to assert, that there is something more becoming in the very errors of nature, where they are undisguised, than in the affectation of virtue itself, where the reality is wanting. And I am so far from being an admirer of prodigies, that I am extremely apt to suspect them; and am always infinitely better pleased with nature

in her more common modes of operation. The precise and premature wisdom, which some girls have cunning enough to assume, is of a more dangerous tendency than any of their natural failings can be; as it effectually covers those secret bad dispositions, which, if they displayed themselves, might be rectified. The hypocrisy of assuming virtues, which are not inherent in the heart, prevents the growth and disclosure of those real ones, which it is the great end of education to cultivate.

But if the natural indications of the temper are to be suppressed and stifled, where are the diagnostics, by which the state of the mind is to be known? The wise author of all things, who did nothing in vain, doubtless intended them as symptoms, by which to judge of the diseases of the heart; and it is impossible diseases should be cured before they are known. If the stream be so cut off, as to prevent communication, or so choked up as to defeat discovery, how shall we ever reach the source, out of which are the issues of life?

This cunning, which of all the different dispositions girls discover, is most to be dreaded, is increased by nothing so much as by fear. If those about them express violent and reasonable anger at every trivial offence, it will always promote this temper, and will very frequently create it, where there was a natural tendency to frankness. The indiscreet transports of rage, which many betray on every slight occasion, and the little distinction they make between venial errors and premeditated crimes, naturally dispose

a child to conceal, what she does not however care to suppress. Anger in one will not remedy the faults of another; for how can an instrument of sin cure sin? If a girl is kept in a state of perpetual and slavish terror, she will, perhaps, have artifice enough to conceal those propensities which she knows are wrong, or those actions which she thinks are most obnoxious to punishment. But, nevertheless, she will not cease to indulge those propensities, and to commit those actions, when she can do it with impunity.

Good *dispositions*, of themselves, will go but a very little way, unless they are confirmed into good *principles*. And this cannot be effected but by a careful course of religious instruction, and a patient and laborious cultivation of the moral temper.

But, though girls should not be treated with unkindness, nor the first openings of the passions blighted by cold severity; yet I am of opinion, that young females should be accustomed, very early in life, to a certain degree of restraint. The natural cast of character, and the moral distinctions between the sexes, should not be disregarded, even in childhood. That bold, independent, enterprising spirit, which is so much admired in boys, should not, when it happens to discover itself in the other sex, be encouraged, but suppressed. Girls should be taught to give up their opinions betimes, and not pertinaciously to carry on a dispute, even if they should know themselves to be in the right, I do not mean, that they should be robbed of the liberty of private judgment, but that they should by no means be

encouraged to contract a contentious or contradictory turn. It is of the greatest importance to their future happiness, that they should acquire a submissive temper, and a forbearing spirit; for it is a lesson which the world will not fail to make them frequently practise, when they come abroad into it; and they will not practise it the worse, for having learnt it the sooner. These early restraints in the limitation here meant, are so far from being an effect of cruelty, that they are the most indubitable marks of affection, and are the more meritorious, as they are severe trials of tenderness. But all the beneficial effects, which a mother can expect from this watchfulness, will be entirely defeated, if it is practised occasionally, and not habitually, and if it ever appears to be used to gratify caprice, ill-humour, or resentment.

Those, who have children to educate, ought to be extremely patient: it is indeed a labour of love. They should reflect, that extraordinary talents are neither essential to the well being of society, nor to the happiness of individuals. If that had been the case, the beneficent Father of the universe would not have made them so rare. For it is as easy for an Almighty Creator to provide a Newton, as an ordinary man; and he could have made those powers common which we now consider as wonderful, without any miraculous exertion of his omnipotence, if the existence of many Newtons had been necessary to the perfection of his wise and gracious plan.

Surely, therefore, there is more piety, as well as more sense, in labouring to improve the talents which children actually have, than in la-

menting that they do not possess supernatural endowments, or angelic perfections. A passage of lord Bacon's furnishes an admirable incitement for endeavouring to carry the amiable and christian grace of charity to its farthest extent, instead of indulging an over-anxious care for more brilliant but less important acquisitions. "The desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall; the desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall; but in charity is no excess; neither can men nor angels come into danger by it."

A girl who has docility, will seldom be found to want understanding enough for all the purposes of a social, a happy, and an useful life. And when we behold the tender hope of fond and anxious love, blasted by disappointment, the defect will as often be discovered to proceed from the neglect or the error of cultivation, as from the natural temper; and those who lament the evil, will sometimes be found to have occasioned it.

It is as injudicious for parents to set out with too sanguine a dependence on the merit of their children, as it is for them to be discouraged at every repulse. When their wishes are defeated in this or that particular instance, where they had treasured up some darling expectation, this is so far from being a reason for relaxing their attention, that it ought to be an additional motive for redoubling it. Those, who hope to do a great deal, must not expect to do every thing. If they know any thing of the malignity of sin, the blindness of prejudice, or the corruption of the human heart, they will also know, that that heart will at

ways remain, after the very best possible education, full of infirmity and imperfection. Extraordinary allowances, therefore, must be made for the weakness of nature in this its weakest state. After much is done, much will remain to do, and much, very much, will still be left undone. For this regulation of the passions and affections cannot be the work of education alone, without the concurrence of divine grace operating on the heart. Why then should parents repine, if their efforts are not always crowned with immediate success? They should consider, that they are not educating cherubs and seraphs, but men and women—creatures, who at their best estate are altogether vanity: how little then can be expected from them in the weakness and imbecility of infancy! I have dwelt on this part of the subject the longer, because I am certain that many, who have set out with a warm and active zeal, have cooled on the very first discouragement, and have afterwards almost totally remitted their vigilance, through a criminal kind of despair.

Great allowances must be made for a profusion of gaiety, loquacity, and even indiscretion in children, that there may be animation enough left to supply an active and useful character, when the first fermentation of the youthful passions is over, and the redundant spirits shall come to subside.

If it be true, as a consummate judge of human nature has observed,

That not a vanity is giv'n in vain,

it is also true, that there is scarcely a single passion, which may not be turned to some good ac-

count, if prudently rectified, and skilfully turned into the road of some neighbouring virtue. It cannot be violently bent, or unnaturally forced towards an object of a totally opposite nature, but may be gradually inclined towards a correspondent but superior affection. Anger, hatred, resentment, and ambition, the most restless and turbulent passions which shake and distract the human soul, may be let to become the most active opposers of sin, after having been its most successful instruments. Our anger, for instance, which can never be totally subdued, may be made to turn against ourselves, for our weak and imperfect obedience—our hatred, against every species of vice—our ambition, which will not be discarded, may be ennobled: it will not change its name, but its object; it will despise what it lately valued, nor be contented to grasp at less than immortality.

Thus the joys, fears, hopes, desires, all the passions and affections, which separate in various currents from the soul, will, if directed into their proper channels, after having fertilized wherever they have flowed, return again to swell and enrich the parent source.

That the very passions which appear the most uncontrolable and unpromising may be intended, in the great scheme of Providence, to answer some important purpose, is remarkably evidenced in the character and history of saint Paul. A remark on this subject by an ingenious old Spanish writer, which I will here take the liberty to translate, will better illustrate my meaning.

“To convert the bitterest enemy into the most

“zealous advocate, is the work of God for the
 “instruction of man. Plutarch has observed, that
 “the medical science would be brought to the
 “utmost perfection, when poison should be con-
 “verted into physic. Thus, in the mortal dis-
 “ease of Judaism and idolatry, our blessed Lord
 “converted the adder’s venom of Saul the per-
 “secutor, into that cement which made Paul the
 “chosen vessel. That manly activity, that restless
 “ardor, that burning zeal for the law of his fa-
 “thers, that ardent thirst for the blood of chris-
 “tians, did the Son of God find necessary in the
 “man who was one day to become the defender
 “of his suffering people.”*

To win the passions, therefore, over to the cause of virtue, answers a much nobler end than their extinction would possibly do, even if that could be effected. But it is their nature never to observe a neutrality; they are either rebels or auxiliaries: and an enemy subdued is an ally obtained. If I may be allowed to change the allusion so soon, I would say, that the passions also resemble fires, which are friendly and beneficial when under proper direction; but if suffered to blaze without restraint, they carry devastation along with them, and, if totally extinguished, leave the benighted mind in a state of cold and comfortless inanity.

But in speaking of the usefulness of the passions, as instruments of virtue, *envy* and *lying* must always be excepted: these I am persuaded, must either go on in still progressive mischief,

* Obras de Queveda, vida de San Pablo Apostol.

or else be radically cured before any good can be expected from the heart which has been infected with them. For I never will believe that envy, though passed through all the moral strainers, can be refined into a virtuous emulation, or lying improved into an agreeable turn for innocent invention. Almost all the other passions may be made to take an amiable hue : but these two must either be totally extirpated, or be always contented to preserve their original deformity, and to wear their native black.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION

TO THE FEMALE CHARACTER.

VARIOUS are the reasons why the greater part of mankind cannot apply themselves to arts or letters. Particular studies are only suited to the capacities of particular persons. Some are incapable of applying to them from the delicacy of their sex; some from the unsteadiness of youth; and others from the imbecility of age. Many are precluded by the narrowness of their education, and many by the strictness of their fortune. The wisdom of God is wonderfully manifested in this happy and well ordered diversity, in the powers and properties of his creatures; since by thus admirably suiting the agent to the action, the whole scheme of human affairs is carried on with the most agreeing and consistent œconomy, and no chasm is left for the want of an object to fill it, exactly suited to its nature.

But in the great and universal concerns of religion, both sexes, and all ranks, are equally interested.—The truly catholic spirit of christianity accommodates itself, with an astonishing condescension, to the circumstances of the whole human race. It rejects none on account of their pecuniary wants, their personal infirmities, or their intellectual deficiencies. No superiority of parts is the least recommendation, nor is any depression of fortune the smallest objection. None are too wise to be excused from performing the du-

ties of religion, nor are any too poor to be excluded from the consolations of its promises!

If we admire the wisdom of God, in having furnished different degrees of intelligence, so exactly adapted to their different destinations, and in having fitted every part of his stupendous work, not only to serve its own immediate purpose, but also to contribute to the beauty and perfection of the whole; how much more ought we to adore that goodness which has perfected the divine plan, by appointing one wide, comprehensive, and universal means of salvation—a salvation, which all are invited to partake—by means which all are capable of using—which nothing but voluntary blindness can prevent our comprehending, and nothing but wilful error can hinder us from embracing.

The muses are coy, and will only be wooed and won by some highly favoured suitors. The sciences are lofty, and will not stoop to the reach of ordinary capacities. But “wisdom (by which the royal preacher means piety) is a loving spirit: she is easily seen of them that love her, and fond of all such as seek her.” Nay, she is “so accessible and condescending, that she preventeth them that desire her, making herself first known unto them.”

We are told by the same animated writer, that “wisdom is the breath of the power of God.” How infinitely superior, in grandeur and sublimity, is this description to the origin of the *wisdom* of the heathens, as described by their poets and mythologists! In the exalted strains of the Hebrew poetry we read, that “Wisdom is th

“brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness.”

The philosophical author of *The Defence of Learning* observes, that knowledge has something of venom and malignity in it, when taken without its proper corrective, and what that is, the inspired St. Paul teaches us, by placing it as the immediate antidote: *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*. Perhaps, it is the vanity of human wisdom, unchastised by this correcting principle, which has made so many infidels. It may proceed from the arrogance of a self-sufficient pride, that some philosophers disdain to acknowledge their belief in a Being, who have judged proper to conceal from them the infinite wisdom of his counsels: who (to borrow the lofty language of the man of Uz) refused to consult them when he laid the foundations of the earth, when he shut up the sea with doors, and made the clouds the garment thereof.

A man must be an infidel either from pride, prejudice, or bad education: he cannot be one unawares, or by surprise; for infidelity is not occasioned by sudden impulse or violent temptation. He may be hurried by some vehement desire into an immoral action, at which he will blush in his cooler moments, and which he will lament, as the sad effect of a spirit unsubdued by religion: but infidelity is a calm, considerate act, which cannot plead the weakness of the heart, or the seduction of the senses. Even good men frequently fail in their duty through the infirmities of nature and the allurements of the

world; but the infidel errs on a plan, on a settled and deliberate principle.

But though the minds of men are sometimes fatally infected with this disease, either through unhappy prepossession or some of the other causes above mentioned: yet I am unwilling to believe, that there is in nature so monstrously incongruous a being, as a *femate infidel*. The least reflection on the temper, the character, and the education of women, makes the mind revolt with horror from an idea so improbable and so unnatural.

May I be allowed to observe, that, in general, the minds of girls seem more aptly prepared, in their early youth, for the reception of serious impressions, than those of the other sex, and that their less exposed situations, in more advanced life, qualify them better for the preservation of them? The daughters (of good parents I mean) are often more carefully instructed in their religious duties than the sons, and this from a variety of causes. They are not so soon sent from under the parental eye into the bustle of the world, or so early exposed to the contagion of bad example: their hearts are naturally more flexible, soft, and liable to any kind of impression the forming hand may stamp on them; and lastly, as they do not receive the same classical education with boys, their feeble minds are not obliged at once to receive and separate the precepts of christianity and the documents of pagan philosophy.—The necessity of doing this perhaps somewhat weakens the serious impressions of young men, at least till the understanding is

formed, and confuses their ideas of piety, by mixing them with so much heterogeneous matter. They only casually read, or hear read, the scriptures of truth, while they are obliged to learn by heart, construe, and repeat the poetical fables of the less than human gods of the ancients. And as the excellent author of *The internal evidence of the christian religion* observes, "Nothing has so much contributed to corrupt the true spirit of the christian institution, as that partiality which we contract, in our earliest education, for the manners of pagan antiquity."

Girls, therefore, who do *not* contract this early partiality, ought to have a clearer notion of their religious duties; they are not obliged, at an age when the judgment is so weak, to distinguish between the doctrines of Zeno, of Epicurus, and of Christ; and to embarrass their minds with the various morals which were taught in the *porch*, in the *academy*, and on the *mount*.

It is presumed, that these remarks cannot possibly be so misunderstood, as to be construed into the least disrespect to literature, or a want of the highest reverence for a learned education, the basis of all elegant knowledge: they are only intended, with all proper deference, to point out to young women, that, however inferior their advantages of acquiring a knowledge of the belles-lettres are to those of the other sex; yet it depends on themselves not to be surpassed in this most important of all studies, for which their abilities are equal, and their opportunities, perhaps, greater.

But the mere exemption from infidelity is so

small a part of the religious character, that I hope no one will attempt to claim any merit from this negative sort of goodness, or value herself merely for not being the very worst thing she possibly can be. Let no mistaken girl fancy she gives a proof of her wit by her want of piety, or that a contempt of things serious and sacred will exalt her understanding, or raise her character, even in the opinion of the most avowed male infidels. For one may venture to affirm, that with all their profligate ideas both of women and of religion, neither Bolingbroke, Warton, Buckingham, nor even *lord Chesterfield himself*, would have esteemed a woman the more for her being irreligious.

With whatever ridicule a polite free-thinker may affect to treat religion himself, he will think it necessary his wife should entertain different notions of it. He may pretend to despise it as a matter of opinion depending on creeds and systems; but, if he is a man of sense, he will know the value of it, as a governing principle, which is to influence her conduct and direct her actions. If he sees her unaffectedly sincere in the practice of her religious duties, it will be a secret pledge to him, that she will be equally exact in fulfilling the conjugal; for he can have no reasonable dependence on her attachment to *him*, if he has no opinion of her fidelity to God; for she who neglects first duties, gives but an indifferent proof of her disposition to fill up inferior ones; and how can a man of any understanding (whatever his own religious professions may be) trust that woman with the care of his family,

and the education of his children, who wants herself the best incentive to a virtuous life, the belief, that she is an accountable creature, and the reflection that she has an immortal soul?

Cicero spoke it as the highest commendation of Cato's character, that he embraced philosophy, not for the sake of *disputing* like a philosopher, but of *living* like one. The chief purpose of christian knowledge is to promote the great end of a christian life. Every rational woman should, no doubt, be able to give a reason of the hope that is in her; but this knowledge is best acquired, and the duties consequent on it best performed, by reading books of plain piety and practical devotion, and not by entering into the endless feuds, and engaging in the unprofitable contentions, of partial controversialists. Nothing is more unamiable than the narrow spirit of party zeal, nor more disgusting than to hear a woman deal out judgments, and denounce vengeance against any one, who happens to differ from her in some opinion, perhaps of no real importance, and which, it is probable, she may be just as wrong in rejecting, as the object of her censure is in embracing. A furious and unmerciful female bigot, wanders as far beyond the limits prescribed to her sex, as a Thalestris or a Joan d'Arc. Violent debate has made as few converts as the sword, and both these instruments are particularly unbecoming, when wielded by a female hand.

But though no one will be frightened out of their opinions, yet they may be persuaded out of them; they may be touched by the affecting earnestness of serious conversation, and allured

by the attractive beauty of a consistently serious life. And while a young woman ought to dread the name of a wrangling polemic, it is her duty to aspire after the honourable character of a sincere christian. But this dignified character she can by no means deserve, if she is ever afraid to avow her principles, or ashamed to defend them. A profligate, who makes it a point to ridicule every thing which comes under the appearance of formal instruction, will be disconcerted at the spirited, yet modest rebuke of a pious young woman. But there is as much efficacy in the manner of reproving profaneness, as in the words. If she corrects it with moroseness, she defeats the effect of her remedy, by her unskilful manner of administering it. If, on the other hand, she affects to defend the insulted cause of God, in a faint tone of voice, and studied ambiguity of phrase, or with an air of levity, and a certain expression of pleasure in her eyes, which proves she is secretly delighted with what she pretends to censure, she injures religion much more than he did, who publicly profaned it; for she plainly indicates, that she either does not believe or does not respect, what she professes. The other attacked it as an open foe: she betrays it as a false friend. No one pays any regard to the opinion of an avowed enemy, but the desertion or treachery of a professed friend, is dangerous indeed!

It is a strange notion, which prevails in the world, that religion only belongs to the old and the melancholy, and that it is not worth while to pay the least attention to it, while we are capable of

attending to any thing else. They allow it to be proper enough for the clergy, whose business it is, and for the aged, who have not spirits for any business at all. But till they can prove, that none except the clergy and aged *die*, it must be confessed that this is most wretched reasoning.

Great injury is done to the interests of religion, by placing it in a gloomy and unamiable light. It is sometimes spoken of, as if it would actually make a handsome woman ugly, or a young one wrinkled. But can any thing be more absurd, than to represent the beauty of holiness as the source of deformity?

There are few, perhaps, so entirely plunged in business, or absorbed in pleasure, as not to intend, at some future time, to set about a religious life in good earnest. But then they consider it as a kind of *dernier resort*, and think it prudent to defer flying to this disagreeable refuge, till they have no relish left for any thing else. Do they forget, that to perform this great business well, requires all the strength of their youth, and all the vigour of their unimpaired capacities? To confirm this assertion, they may observe how much the slightest indisposition, even in the most active season of life, disorders every faculty and disqualifies them for attending to the most ordinary affairs; and then let them reflect, how little able they will be to transact the most important of all business, in the moment of excruciating pain, or in the day of universal debility.

When the senses are palled with excessive gratification—when the eye is tired with seeing, and the ear with hearing—when the spirits are

so sunk, that the *grasshopper* is become a burden—how shall the blunted apprehension be capable of understanding a new science, or the worn-out heart be able to relish a new pleasure?

To put off religion till we have lost all taste for amusement—to refuse listening to the “voice of the charmer,” till our enfeebled organs can no longer listen to the voice of “singing men and singing women,”—and not to devote our days to heaven, till we have “no pleasure in them” ourselves, is but an ungracious offering. And it is a wretched sacrifice to the God of heaven, to present him with the remnants of decayed appetites, and the leavings of extinguished passions.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

ON GENIUS, TASTE, GOOD SENSE, &c.*

GOOD *sense* is as different from *genius*, as perception is from invention; yet, though distinct qualities, they frequently subsist together. It is altogether opposite to *wit*, but by no means inconsistent with it. It is not science; for there is such a thing as unlettered good sense: yet, though it is neither wit, learning, nor genius, it is a substitute for each, where they do not exist, and the perfection of all, where they do.

Good sense is so far from deserving the appellation of *common sense*, by which it is frequently called, that it is perhaps one of the rarest qualities of the human mind. If, indeed, this name is given it in respect to its peculiar suitableness to the purposes of common life, there is great propriety in it. Good sense appears to differ from taste in this, that taste is an instantaneous decision of the mind, a sudden relish of what is beautiful, or disgust at what is defective, in an object, without waiting for the slower confirmation of the judgment. Good sense is perhaps, that confirmation, which establishes a suddenly conceived

* The author begs leave to offer an apology for introducing this essay, which, she fears, may be thought foreign to her purpose. But she hopes that her earnest desire of exciting a taste for literature in young ladies, (which encouraged her to hazard the following remarks) will not *obstruct* her general design, even if it does not actually *promote* it.

idea, or feeling, by the powers of comparing and reflecting. They differ also in this; that taste seems to have a more immediate reference to arts, to literature, and to almost every object of the senses; while good sense rises to moral excellence, and exerts its influence on life and manners. Taste is fitted to the perception and enjoyment of whatever is beautiful in art or nature: good sense, to the improvement of the conduct, and the regulation of the heart.

Yet the term, good sense, is used indiscriminately to express either a finished taste for letters, or an invariable prudence in the affairs of life. It is sometimes applied to the most moderate abilities, in which case the expression is certainly too strong; and at others to the most shining, when it is as much too weak and inadequate. A sensible man is the usual, but appropriated praise, for every degree in the scale of understanding, from the sober mortal, who obtains it by his decent demeanor and solid dulness, to him whose talents qualify him to rank with a Bacon, a Harris, or a Johnson.

Genius is the power of invention and imitation.—It is an incommunicable faculty: no art or skill of the possessor can bestow the smallest portion of it on another: no pains or labour can reach the summit of perfection, where the seeds of it are wanting in the mind: yet it is capable of infinite improvement where it actually exists, and is attended with the highest capacity of communicating instruction as well as delight to others.

It is the peculiar property of genius to strike out great or beautiful things: it is the felicity of

good sense not to do absurd ones. Genius breaks out in splendid sentiments and elevated ideas: good sense confines its more circumscribed, but perhaps more useful walk, within the limits of prudence and propriety.

The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heav'n to earth, from earth to
heav'n;
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

This is, perhaps, the finest picture of human genius that ever was drawn by a human pencil. It presents a lively image of a creative imagination, or a power of inventing things which have no actual existence.

With superficial judges, who, it must be confessed, make up the greater part of the mass of mankind, talents are only liked or understood to a certain degree. Lofty ideas are above the reach of ordinary apprehensions: the vulgar allow those who possess them to be in a somewhat higher state of mind than themselves; but of the vast gulph which separates them they have not the least conception. They acknowledge a superiority; but of its extent they neither know the value, nor can they conceive the reality. It is true, the mind, as well as the eye, can take in objects larger than itself; but this is only true of great minds: for a man of low capacity, who considers a consummate genius, resembles one, who seeing a column for the first time, and standing at too great a distance to take

in the whole of it, concludes it to be flat; or like one unacquainted with the first principles of philosophy, who, finding the sensible horizon appear a plane surface, can form no idea of the spherical form of the whole, which he does not see, and laughs at the account of antipodes, which he cannot comprehend.

Whatever is excellent is also rare; what is useful is more common. How many thousands are born qualified for the coarse employments of life, for one who is capable of excelling in the fine arts; yet so it ought to be; because our natural wants are more numerous, and more importunate, than the intellectual.

Whenever it happens that a man of distinguished talents has been drawn by mistake, or precipitated by passion, into any dangerous indiscretion; it is common for those, whose coldness of temper has supplied the place, and usurped the name of prudence, to boast of their own steadier virtue, and triumph in their own superior caution; only because they have never been assailed by a temptation strong enough to surprise them into error. And with what a visible appropriation of the character to themselves, do they constantly conclude, with a cordial compliment to *common sense*!—They point out the beauty and usefulness of this quality so forcibly and explicitly, that you cannot possibly mistake whose picture they are drawing with so flattering a pencil. The unhappy man, whose conduct has been so feelingly arraigned, perhaps acted from good, though mistaken, motives—at least from motives of which his censurer has not ca-

capacity to judge; but the event was unfavourable, nay the action might be really wrong, and the vulgar maliciously take the opportunity of this single indiscretion, to lift themselves nearer on a level with a character, which, except in this instance, has always thrown them at the most disgraceful and mortifying distance.

The elegant biographer of Collins, in his affecting apology for that unfortunate genius, remarks, that "the gifts of imagination bring the heaviest task on the vigilance of reason; and to bear those faculties with unerring rectitude or invariable propriety, requires a degree of firmness, and of cool attention, which does not always attend the higher gifts of the mind: yet difficult as nature herself seems to have rendered the task of regularity to genius, it is the supreme consolation of dulness, and of folly, to point with Gothic triumph to those excesses which are the overflowing of faculties they never enjoyed."

What the greater part of the world mean by common sense, will be generally found, on a closer enquiry, to be art, fraud, or selfishness; that sort of saving prudence which makes men extremely attentive to their own safety, or profit—diligent in the pursuit of their own pleasures or interests—and perfectly at their ease as to what becomes of the rest of mankind. Furious, where their own property is concerned, philosophers when nothing but the good of others is at stake, and perfectly resigned under all calamities but their own.

When we see so many accomplished wits of

the present age, as remarkable for the decorum of their lives, as for the brilliancy of their writings, we may believe, that next to principle, it is owing to their *good sense*, which regulates and chastises their imaginations. The vast conceptions which enable a true genius to ascend the sublimest heights, may be so connected with the stronger passions, as to give it a natural tendency to fly off from the straight line of regularity; till good sense, acting on the fancy, makes it gravitate powerfully towards that virtue which is its proper centre.

Add to this, when it is considered with what imperfection the divine wisdom has thought fit to stamp every thing human, it will be found, that excellence and infirmity are so inseparably wound up in each other, that a man derives the soreness of temper, and irritability of nerve which makes him uneasy to others, and unhappy in himself, from those exquisite feelings, and that elevated pitch of thought, by which, as the apostle expresses it on a more serious occasion, he is, as it were, out of the body.

It is not astonishing, therefore, when the spirit is carried away by the magnificence of its own ideas,

Not touch'd, but rapt—not weaken'd but inspir'd, that the frail body, which is the natural victim of pain, disease, and death, should not always be able to follow the mind in its aspiring flights, but should be as imperfect as if it belonged only to an ordinary soul.

Besides, might not providence intend to humble human pride, by presenting to our eyes so

mortifying a view of the weakness and infirmity of even his best work? Perhaps man, who is already but a little lower than the angels, might, like the revolted spirits, totally have shaken off obedience and submission to his Creator, had not God wisely tempered human excellence with a certain consciousness of its own imperfection. But though this enevitable alloy of weakness may frequently be found in the best characters, yet how can that be the source of triumph and exaltation to any, which, if properly weighed, must be the deepest motive of humiliation to all! A good-natured man will be so far from rejoicing, that he will be secretly troubled, whenever he reads that the greatest Roman moralist was tainted with avarice, and the greatest British philosopher with venality.

It is remarked by Pope, in his essay on criticism, that,

Ten censure wrong, for one that writes amiss.

But I apprehend it does not therefore follow, that to judge is more difficult than to write. If this were the case, the critic would be superior to the poet, whereas it appears to be directly the contrary. "The critic, (says the great champion of Shakspeare) but fashions the body of a work; the poet must add the soul, which gives force and direction to its actions and gestures." It should seem, that the reason why so many more judge wrong, than write ill, is because the number of readers is beyond all proportion greater than the number of writers. Every man that reads is, in some measure, a critic, and, with very common abilities, may point out real faults and ma-

terial errors in a very well-written book: but it by no means follows, that he is able to write any thing comparable to the work which he is capable of censuring. And unless the numbers of those who write and of those who judge were more equal, the calculation seems not to be quite fair.

A capacity for relishing works of genius is the indubitable sign of a good taste. But if a proper disposition and ability to enjoy the compositions of others, entitle a man to the claim of reputation, it is still a far inferior degree of merit to his who can invent and produce those compositions, the bare disquisition of which gives the critic no small share of *fauffe*.

The president of the royal academy, in his admirable *discourse on imitation*, has set the folly of depending on unassisted genius, in the clearest light; and has shown the necessity of adding the knowledge of others, to our own native powers, in his usual striking and masterly manner. "The mind," says he, "a barren soil—is a soil soon exhausted, and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continually fertilized, and enriched with foreign matter."

Yet it has been objected, that study is a great enemy to originality; but even if this were true, it would perhaps be as well that author should give us the ideas of still better writers, mixed and assimilated with the matter in his own mind, as those crude and undigested thoughts, which he values under the notion that they are original. The sweetest honey neither tastes of the rose, the honey-suckle, nor the carnation; yet it

is compounded of the very essence of them all.

If, in the other fine arts, this accumulation of knowledge is necessary, it is indispensably so in poetry. It is a fatal rashness for any one to trust too much to his own stock of ideas. He must invigorate them by exercise, polish them by conversation, and increase them by every species of elegant and virtuous knowledge, and the mind will not fail to reproduce, with interest, those seeds, which are sown in it by study and observation. Above all, let every one guard against the dangerous opinion, that he knows enough: an opinion that will weaken the energy and reduce the powers of the mind, which, though once perhaps vigorous and effectual, will be sunk to a state of literary imbecility, by cherishing vain and presumptuous ideas of his own independence.

For instance, it may not be necessary that a poet should be deeply skilled in the Linnæan system; but it must be allowed, that a general acquaintance with plants and flowers will furnish him with a delightful and profitable species of instruction. He is not obliged to trace nature in all her nice and varied operations, with the minute accuracy of a Boyle, or the laborious investigation of a Newton; but his *good sense* will point out to him, that no inconsiderable portion of philosophical knowledge is requisite to the completion of his literary character. The sciences are more independent, and require little or no assistance from the graces of poetry; but poetry, if she would charm and instruct, must not be so haughty; she must be contented to borrow

of the sciences, many of her choicest allusions, and many of her most graceful embellishments; and does it not magnify the character of true poetry, that she includes within herself all the scattered graces of every separate art?

The rules of the great masters in criticism may not be so necessary to the forming a good taste as the examination of those original mines from whence they drew their treasures of knowledge.

The three celebrated essays on the art of poetry do not teach so much by their laws as by their examples; the dead letter of their rules is less instructive than the living spirit of their verse. Yet these rules are to a young poet what the study of logarithms is to a young mathematician; they do not so much contribute to form his judgment, as afford him the satisfaction of convincing him that he is right. They do not preclude the difficulty of the operation; but at the conclusion of it, furnish him with a fuller demonstration that he has proceeded on proper principles. When he has well studied the masters in whose schools the first critics formed themselves, and fancies he has caught a spark of their divine flame, it may be a good method to try his own compositions by the test of the critic rules, so far, indeed, as the mechanism of poetry goes. If the examination be fair and candid, this trial, like the touch of Ithuriel's spear, will detect every latent error, and bring to light every favourite failing.

Good taste always suits the measure of its admiration to the merit of the composition it examines. It accommodates its praises, or its cen-

sure, to the excellence of a work, and appropriates it to the nature of it. General applause, or indiscriminate abuse, is the sign of a vulgar understanding. There are certain blemishes which the judicious and good natured reader will candidly overlook. But the false sublime, the tumour which is intended for greatness, the distorted figure, the puerile conceit, and the incongruous metaphor, these are defects for which scarcely any other kind of merit can atone. And yet there may be more hope of a writer (especially if he be a young one) who is now and then guilty of some of these faults, than of one who avoids them all, not through judgment, but feebleness, and who, instead of deviating into error, is continually falling short of excellence. The mere absence of error implies that moderate and inferior degree of merit, with which a cold heart and a phlegmatic taste will be better satisfied, than with the magnificent irregularities of exalted spirits. It stretches some minds to an uneasy extension, to be obliged to attend to compositions superlatively excellent; and it contracts liberal souls to a painful narrowness to descend to books of inferior merit. A work of capital genius, to a man of an ordinary mind, is the bed of Procrustes to one of a short stature; the man is too little to fill up the space assigned to him, and undergoes the torture in attempting it: and a moderate or low production, to a man of bright talents, is the punishment inflicted by Mezentius; the living spirit has too much animation to endure patiently to be in contact with a dead body.

Taste seems to be a sentiment of the soul, which gives the bias to opinion; for we feel before we reflect. Without this sentiment, all knowledge, learning, and opinion, would be cold, inert materials; whereas they become active principles, when stirred, kindled, and inflamed by this animating quality.

There is another feeling, which is called enthusiasm. The enthusiasm of sensible hearts is so strong, that it not only yields to the impulse with which striking objects act on it; but such hearts help on the effect by their own sensibility. In a scene where Shakspeare and Hodgkinson give perfection to each other, the feeling heart does not merely accede to the delirium they occasion: it does more; it is enamoured of it; it solicits the delusion; it sues to be deceived, and grudgingly cherishes the sacred treasure of its feelings. The poet and performer concur in carrying us

Beyond this visible diurnal sphere.

They bear us aloft in their airy course, with unresisted rapidity, if they meet not with any obstruction from the coldness of our own feelings. Perhaps only a few fine spirits can enter into the detail of their writing and acting: but the multitude do not enjoy less acutely, because they are not able philosophically to analyse the sources of their joy or sorrow. If the others have the advantage of judging, these have at least the privilege of feeling: and it is not from complaisance to a few leading judges, that they burst into peals of laughter, or melt into delightful agony; their hearts decide, and that is a decision from which

there lies no appeal. It must, however, be confessed, that the nicer separations of character, and the lighter and almost imperceptible shades which sometimes distinguish them, will not be intimately relished, unless there be a consonancy of taste as well as feeling in the spectators; though where the passions are principally concerned, the profane vulgar come in for a larger portion of the universal delight, than critics and connoisseurs are willing to allow them.

Yet enthusiasm, though the natural concomitant of genius, is no more genius itself, than drunkenness is cheerfulness: and that enthusiasm, which discovers itself on occasions not worthy to excite it, is the mark of a wretched judgment and a false taste.

Nature produces innumerable objects: to imitate them, is the province of genius; to direct those imitations, is the property of judgment; to decide on their effects, is the business of taste. For taste, who sits as supreme judge on the productions of genius, is not satisfied when she merely imitates nature; she must also, says an ingenious French writer, imitate *beautiful* nature. It requires no less judgment to reject than to choose: and genius might imitate what is vulgar, under pretence that it was natural, if taste did not carefully point out those objects which are most proper for imitation. It also requires a very nice discernment to distinguish verisimilitude from truth; for there is a truth in taste nearly as conclusive as demonstration in mathematics.

Genius, when in full impetuosity of its career, often touches on the very brink of error; and is,

perhaps, never so near the verge of the precipice, as when indulging its sublimest flights. It is in those great, but dangerous moments, that the curb of vigilant judgment is most wanting: while safe and sober dulness observes one tedious and insipid round of tiresome uniformity, and steers equally clear of eccentricity and of beauty. Dulness has few redundancies to retrench, few luxuriances to prune, and few irregularities to smooth. These, though errors, are the errors of genius, for there is rarely redundancy without plenitude, or irregularity without greatness. The excesses of genius may easily be retrenched; but the deficiencies of dulness can never be supplied.

Those, who copy from others, will doubtless be less excellent than those who copy from nature. To imitate imitators, is the way to depart too far from the great original herself. The later copies of an engraving retain fainter and fainter traces of the subject, to which the earlier impressions bore so strong a resemblance.

It seems very extraordinary, that it should be the most difficult thing in the world to be natural; and that it should be harder to hit off the manners of real life, and to delineate such characters as we converse with every day, than to imagine such as do not exist. But caricature is much easier than an exact outline—and the colouring of fancy less difficult than that of truth.

People do not always know what taste they have, till it is awakened by some corresponding object; nay, genius itself is a fire, which, in many minds, would never blaze, if not kindled by some external cause.

Nature, that munificent mother, when she bestows the powers of judging, accompanies it with the capacity of enjoying. The judgment, which is clear-sighted, points out such objects as are calculated to inspire love; and the heart instantaneously attaches itself to whatsoever is lovely.

In regard to literary reputation, a great deal depends on the state of learning in the particular age or nation, in which an author lives. In a dark and ignorant period, moderate knowledge will entitle its possessor to a considerable share of fame; whereas, to be distinguished in a polite and lettered age, requires striking parts and deep erudition.

When a nation begins to emerge from a state of mental darkness, and to strike out the first rudiments of improvement, it chalks out a few strong but incorrect sketches, gives the rude outlines of general art, and leaves the filling up to the leisure of happier days, and the refinement of more enlightened times. Their drawing is a rude *Shozzo*, and their poetry wild minstrelsy.

Perfection of taste is a point which a nation no sooner reaches, than it overshoots; and it is more difficult to return to it, after having passed it, than it was to attain, when they fell short of it. Where the arts begin to languish after having flourished, they seldom, indeed, fall back to their original barbarism: but a certain feebleness of exertion takes place, and it is more difficult to recover them from this dying languor to their proper strength, than it was to polish them from their former rudeness; for it is a less formidable

undertaking, to refine barbarity, than to stop decay: the first may be laboured into elegance; but the latter will rarely be strengthened into vigour.

Taste exerts itself at first but feebly and imperfectly; it is repressed and kept back by a crowd of the most discouraging prejudices: like an infant prince, who, though born to reign, yet holds an idle sceptre, which he has not power to use, but is obliged to see with the eyes, and hear through the ears of other men.

A writer of correct taste will hardly ever go out of his way, even in search of embellishment; he will study to attain the best end by the most natural means; for he knows that what is not natural cannot be beautiful, and that nothing can be beautiful out of its own place: for an improper situation will convert the most striking beauty into a glaring defect. When, by a well connected chain of ideas, or a judicious succession of events, the reader is snatched to "Thebes or Athens," what can be more impertinent than for the poet to obstruct the operation of the passion he has just been kindling, by introducing a conceit which contradicts his purpose, and interrupts his business! Indeed, we cannot be transported, even in idea, to those places, if the poet does not manage so adroitly as not to make us sensible of the journey: the instant we feel we are travelling, the writer's art fails, and the delirium is at an end.

Proserpine, says Ovid, would have been restored to her mother Ceres, had not Ascalaphus seen her stop to gather a golden apple, when the

terms of her restoration were, that she should taste nothing. A story pregnant with instruction for lively writers, who, by neglecting the main business, and going out of the way for false gratifications, lose sight of the end they should principally keep in view. It was this false taste that introduced the numberless *concetti*, which disgrace the brightest of the Italian poets; and this is the reason, why the reader only feels short and interrupted snatches of delight, in perusing the brilliant but unequal compositions of Ariosto, instead of that unbroken and undiminished pleasure, which he constantly receives from Virgil, from Milton, and generally from Tasso. The first mentioned Italian is the Atalanta, who will interrupt the most eager career, to pick up the glittering mischief; while the Mantuan and the British bards, like Hippomenes, press on warm in the pursuit, and unseduced by temptation.

A writer of real taste will take great pains in the perfection of his style, to make the reader believe that he took none at all. The writing, which appears to be most easy, will be generally found to be least imitable. The most elegant verses are the most easily retained: they fasten themselves on the memory, without its making any effort to preserve them, and we are apt to imagine, that what is remembered with ease, was written without difficulty.

To conclude: genius is a rare and precious gem, of which few know the worth; it is fitter for the cabinet of the connoisseur, than for the commerce of mankind. Good sense is a bank-bill, convenient for change, negotiable at all

times, and current in all places. It knows the value of small things, and considers that an aggregate of them makes up the sum of human affairs. It elevates common concerns into matters of importance, by performing them in the best manner, and at the most suitable season. Good sense carries with it the idea of equality, while genius is always suspected of a design to impose the burden of superiority; and respect is paid to it with that reluctance which always attends other imposts, the lower orders of mankind generally repining most at demands, by which they are least liable to be affected.

As it is the character of genius to penetrate with a lynx's beam into unfathomable abysses and uncreated worlds, and to see what is *not*, so it is the property of good sense to distinguish perfectly, and judge accurately what really *is*. Good sense has not so piercing an eye, but it has as clear a sight. It does not penetrate so deeply, but as far as it *does* see, it discerns distinctly. Good sense is a judicious mechanic, who can produce beauty and convenience out of suitable means, but genius (I speak with reverence of the immeasurable distance) bears some remote resemblance to the divine architect, who produced perfection of beauty without any visible materials; *who spake, and it was created; who said, let it be, and it was.*

THE
LADIES' LIBRARY.

GREGORY'S
LEGACY TO HIS DAUGHTERS.

PREFACE.

THAT the subsequent letters were written by a tender father, in a declining state of health, for the instruction of daughters, and not intended for the public, is a circumstance which will recommend them to every one who considers them in the light of admonition and advice. In such domestic intercourse, no sacrifices are made to prejudices, to customs, to fashionable opinions. Paternal love, paternal care, speak their genuine sentiments, undisguised and unrestrained. A father's zeal for his daughters' improvement in whatever can make a woman amiable, with a father's quick apprehension of the dangers that too often arise, even from the attainment of that very point, suggest his admonitions, and render him attentive to a thousand little graces and decorums, which would escape the nicest moralist, who should undertake the subject on uninterested speculation. Every faculty is on the alarm, when the objects of such tender affections are concerned.

In the writer of these letters, paternal tenderness and vigilance were doubled, as he was at that time sole parent; death having before deprived the young ladies of their excellent mother. His own precarious state of health inspired him with the most tender solicitude for their future welfare; and though he might have concluded, that the impressions made by his instructions and uniform example, could never be effaced from the memory of his children, yet his anxiety for their orphan condition suggested to him this method of continuing to them those advantages.

The editor is encouraged to offer this treatise to the public, by the very favourable reception which the rest of his father's works have met with. The comparative view of the state of man and other animals, and the essay on the office and duties of a physician, have been very generally read: and, if he is not deceived by the partiality of his friends, he has reason to believe they have met with general approbation.

In some of those tracts, the author's object was to improve the taste and understanding of his reader; in others, to mend his heart; in others, to point out to him the proper use of philosophy, by showing its application to the duties of common life. In all his writings, his chief view was the good of his fellow creatures: and as those among his friends, in whose taste and judgment he most confided, think the publication of this small work will contribute to that general design, and at the same time do honor to his memory, the editor can no longer hesitate to comply with their advice, in communicating it to the public.

INTRODUCTION.

My dear girls,

YOU had the misfortune to be deprived of your mother at a time of life when you were insensible of your loss, and could receive little benefit either from her instruction or her example.

Before this comes to your hands, you will likewise have lost your father.

I have had many melancholy reflections on the forlorn and helpless situation you must be in, if it should please God to remove me from you, before you arrive at that period of life, when you will be able to think and act for yourselves. I know mankind too well; I know their falsehood, their dissipation, their coldness to all the duties of friendship and humanity. I know the little attention paid to helpless infancy. You will meet with few friends disinterested enough to do you good offices, when you are incapable of making them any return, by contributing to their interest or their pleasure, or even to the gratification of their vanity.

I have been supported under the gloom naturally arising from these reflections, by a reliance on the goodness of that providence which, has hitherto preserved you, and given me the most pleasing prospect of the goodness of your dispositions: and by the secret hope, that your mother's virtues will entail a blessing on her children.

The anxiety I have for your happiness, ha-

made me resolve to throw together my sentiments relating to your future conduct in life. If I live for some years, you will receive them with much greater advantage, suited to your different geniuses and dispositions. If I die sooner, you must receive them in this very imperfect manner,—the last proof of my affection.

You will all remember your father's fondness, when perhaps every other circumstance relating him is forgotten. This remembrance, I hope, will induce you to give a serious attention to the advices I am now going to leave with you. I can request this attention with the greater confidence, as my sentiments, on the most interesting points that regard life and manners, were entirely correspondent to your mother's, whose judgment and taste I trusted much more than my own.

You must expect that the advices which I shall give you, will be very imperfect, as there are many nameless delicacies in female manners, of which none but a woman can judge. You will have one advantage by attending to what I am going to leave with you; you will hear, at least for once in your lives, the genuine sentiments of a man who has no interest in flattering or deceiving you. I shall throw my reflections together without any studied order, and shall only, to avoid confusion, range them under a few general heads.

You will see, in a little treatise of mine just published, in what an honorable point of view I have considered your sex,—not as domestic drudges, or the slaves of our pleasures, but as

our companions and equals—as designed to soften our hearts and polish our manners—and, as Thomson finely says,

To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life.

I shall not repeat what I have there said on this subject, and shall only observe, that from the view I have given of your natural character and place in society, there arises a certain propriety of conduct, peculiar to your sex. It is this peculiar propriety of female manners, of which I intend to give you my sentiments, without touching on those general rules of conduct by which men and women are equally bound.

While I explain to you that system of conduct which I think will tend most to your honour and happiness, I shall, at the same time, endeavour to point out those virtues and accomplishments which render you most respectable and most amiable in the eyes of my own sex.

RELIGION.

THOUGH the duties of religion, strictly speaking, are equally binding on both sexes, yet certain differences in their natural character and education, render some vices in your sex particularly odious. The natural hardness of our hearts, and strength of our passions, inflamed by the uncontrolled licence we are too often indulged with in our youth, are apt to render our manners more dissolute, and make us less susceptible of the finer feelings of the heart. Your superior delicacy, your modesty, and the usual severity of your education, preserve you, in a great measure, from any temptation to those vices to which we are most subjected. The natural softness and sensibility of your dispositions particularly fit you for the practice of those duties where the heart is chiefly concerned. And this, along with the natural warmth of your imagination, renders you peculiarly susceptible of the feelings of devotion.

There are many circumstances in your situation that peculiarly require the supports of religion, to enable you to act in them with spirit and propriety. Your whole life is often a life of suffering. You cannot plunge into business, or dissipate yourselves in pleasure and riot, as men too often do, when under the pressure of misfortunes. You must bear your sorrows in silence, unknown and unpitied. You must often put on a face of serenity and cheerfulness, when your hearts are torn with anguish, or sinking in despair. Then

your only resource is in the consolations of religion. It is chiefly owing to these, that you bear domestic misfortunes better than we do.

But you are sometimes in very different circumstances, that equally require the restraints of religion. The natural vivacity, and perhaps the natural vanity of your sex, is very apt to lead you into a dissipated state of life, that deceives you under the appearance of innocent pleasure; but which in reality wastes your spirits, impairs your health, weakens all the superior faculties of your minds, and often sullies your reputations. Religion, by checking this dissipation and rage for pleasure, enables you to draw more happiness, even from those very sources of amusement, which, when too frequently applied to, are often productive of satiety and disgust.

Religion is rather a matter of sentiment than reasoning. The important and interesting articles of faith are sufficiently plain. Fix your attention on these, and do not meddle with controversy. If you get into that, you plunge into a chaos, from which you will never be able to extricate yourselves. It spoils the temper, and, I suspect, has no good effect on the heart.

Avoid all books and all conversations, that tend to shake your faith on those great points of religion, which should serve to regulate your conduct, and on which your hopes of future and eternal happiness depend.

Never indulge yourselves in ridicule on religious subjects, nor give countenance to it in others by seeming diverted with what they say

This, to people of good-breding, will be a sufficient check.

I wish you to go no farther than the scriptures for your religious opinions. Embrace those you find clearly revealed. Never perplex yourselves about such as you do not understand, but treat them with silent and becoming reverence. I would advise you to read only such religious books as are addressed to the heart, such as inspire pious and devout affections, such as are proper to direct you in your conduct, and not such as tend to entangle you in the endless maze of opinions and systems.

Be punctual in the stated performance of your private devotions, morning and evening. If you have any sensibility or imagination, this will establish such an intercourse between you and the Supreme Being, as will be of infinite consequence to you in life. It will communicate an habitual cheerfulness to your tempers, give a firmness and steadiness to your virtue, and enable you to go through all the vicissitudes of human life with propriety and dignity.

I wish you to be regular in your attendance on public worship, and in receiving the communion. Allow nothing to interrupt your public or private devotions, except the performance of some active duty in life, to which they should always give place. In your behaviour at public worship, observe an exemplary attention and gravity.

That extreme strictness which I recommend to you in these duties, will be considered, by many of your acquaintance, as a superstitious

attachment to forms; but, in the advices I give you on this and other subjects, I have an eye to the spirit and manners of the age.—There is a levity and dissipation in the present manners, a coldness and listlessness in whatever relates to religion, which cannot fail to infect you, unless you purposely cultivate in your minds a contrary bias, and make the devotional taste habitual.

Avoid all grimace and ostentation in your religious duties. They are the usual cloaks of hypocrisy; at least they show a weak and vain mind.

Do not make religion a subject of common conversation in mixed companies. When it is introduced, rather seem to decline it. At the same time, never suffer any person to insult you by any foolish ribaldry on your religious opinions, but show the same resentment you would naturally do on being offered any other personal insult. But the surest way to avoid this is by a modest reserve on the subject, and by using no freedom with others about their religious sentiments.

Cultivate an enlarged charity for all mankind, however they may differ from you in their religious opinions. That difference may probably arise from causes in which you had no share, and from which you can derive no merit.

Show your regard to religion by a distinguishing respect to all its ministers, of whatever persuasion, who do not, by their lives, dishonour their profession; but never allow them the direction of your consciences, lest they taint you with the narrow spirit of their party.

The best effect of your religion will be a dif

fusive humanity to all in distress. Set apart a certain proportion of your income, as sacred to charitable purposes. But in this, as well as in the practice of every other duty, carefully avoid ostentation. Vanity is always defeating her own purposes. Fame is one of the natural rewards of virtue. Do not pursue her, and she will follow you.

Do not confine your charity to giving money. You may have many opportunities of showing a tender and compassionate spirit, where your money is not wanted. There is a false and unnatural refinement in sensibility, which makes some people shun the sight of every object in distress. Never indulge this, especially where your friends or acquaintances are concerned.—Let the days of their misfortunes, when the world forgets or avoids them, be the season for you to exercise your humanity and friendship. The sight of human misery softens the heart, and makes it better: it checks the pride of health and prosperity; and the distress it occasions is amply compensated by the consciousness of doing your duty, and by the secret endearment which nature has annexed to all our sympathetic sorrows.

Women are greatly deceived, when they think they recommend themselves to our sex, by their indifference about religion. Even those men who are themselves unbelievers, dislike infidelity in you. Every man, who knows human nature, connects a religious taste in your sex with softness and sensibility of heart; at least, we always consider the want of it as a proof of that hard and masculine spirit, which, of all your faults, we dislike the most. Besides, men consider your

religion as one of their principal securities for that female virtue, in which they are most interested. If a gentleman pretends an attachment to any of you, and endeavours to shake your religious principles, be assured he is either a fool, or has designs on you, which he dares not openly avow.

You will probably wonder at my having educated you in a church different from my own. The reason was plainly this: I looked on the difference between our churches to be of no real importance, and that a preference of one to the other was a mere matter of taste. Your mother was educated in the church of England, and had an attachment to it; and I had a prejudice in favor of every thing she liked. It never was her desire that you should be baptized by a clergyman of the church of England, or be educated in that church. On the contrary, the delicacy of her regard to the smallest circumstance that could affect me in the eye of the world, made her anxiously insist it might be otherwise. But I could not yield to her in that kind of generosity. When I lost her, I became still more determined to educate you in that church; as I feel a secret pleasure in doing every thing that appears to me to express my affection and veneration for her memory. I draw but a very faint and imperfect picture of what your mother was, when I endeavour to point out what you should be.*

* The reader will remember, that such observations as respect equally both the sexes, are all along, as much as possible, avoided.

CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR.

ONE of the chief beauties, in a female character, is that modest reserve, that retiring delicacy, which avoids the public eye, and is disconcerted even at the gaze of admiration. I do not wish you to be insensible to applause: if you were, you must become, if not worse, at least less amiable women: but you may be dazzled by that admiration which yet rejoices your hearts.

When a girl ceases to blush, she has lost the most powerful charm of beauty. That extreme sensibility which it indicates, may be a weakness and incumbrance in our sex, as I have too often felt; but in yours it is peculiarly engaging. Pedants, who think themselves philosophers, ask why a woman should blush, when she is conscious of no crime. It is a sufficient answer, that nature has made you to blush when you are guilty of no fault, and has forced us to love you, because you do so.—Blushing is so far from being necessarily an attendant on guilt, that it is the usual companion of innocence.

This modesty, which I think so essential in your sex, will naturally dispose you to be rather silent in company, especially in a large one. People of sense and discernment will never mistake such silence for dulness. One may take a share in conversation, without uttering a syllable. The expression in the countenance shows it, and this never escapes an observing eye.

I should be glad that you had an easy dignity in your behaviour at public places, but not that

confident ease, that unabashed countenance, which seems to set the company at defiance. If, while a gentleman is speaking to you, one of superior rank addresses you, do not let your eager attention and visible preference betray the flutter of your heart: let your pride, on this occasion, preserve you from that meanness, into which your vanity would sink you. Consider that you expose yourselves to the ridicule of the company, and affront one gentleman only to swell the triumph of another, who perhaps thinks he does you honor in speaking to you.

Converse with men even of the first rank, with that dignified modesty, which may prevent the approach of the most distant familiarity, and consequently prevent them from feeling themselves your superiors.

Wit is the most dangerous talent you can possess.—It must be guarded with great discretion and good nature; otherwise it will create you many enemies.—Wit is perfectly consistent with softness and delicacy; yet they are seldom found united. Wit is so flattering to vanity, that they who possess it, become intoxicated, and lose all self command.

Humour is a different quality. It will make your company much solicited; but be cautious how you indulge it. It is often a great enemy to delicacy, and a still greater one to dignity of character. It may sometimes gain you applause, but will never procure you respect.

Be even cautious of displaying your good sense.—It will be thought you assume a superiority over the rest of the company. But if you

happen to have any learning keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts, and a cultivated understanding.

A man of real genius and candour is far superior to this meanness; but such an one will seldom fall in your way; and if, by accident, he should, do not be anxious to shew the full extent of your knowledge. If he has any opportunities of seeing you, he will soon discover it himself; and if you have any advantages of person or manner, and keep your own secret, he will probably give you credit for a great deal more than you possess. The great art of pleasing in conversation consists in making the company pleased with themselves. You will more readily hear than talk yourselves into their good graces.

Beware of detraction, especially where your own sex is concerned. You are generally accused of being particularly addicted to this vice—I think, unjustly. Men are equally guilty of it, when their interests interfere. As your interests more frequently clash, and as your feelings are quicker than ours, your temptations to it are more frequent: for this reason, be particularly tender of the reputation of your own sex, especially when they happen to rival you in our regard. We look on this as the strongest proof of dignity and true greatness of mind.

Show a compassionate sympathy to unfortunate women, especially to those who are rendered so by the villany of men. Indulge a secret pleasure, I may say pride, in being the friends

and refuge of the unhappy, but without the vanity of showing it.

Consider every species of indelicacy in conversation, as shameful in itself, and as highly disgusting to us.—All double entendre is of this sort. The dissoluteness of men's education allows them to be diverted with a kind of wit, which yet they have delicacy enough to be shocked at, when it comes from your mouths, or even when you hear it without pain and contempt.—Virgin purity is of such a delicate nature, that it cannot bear certain things without contamination. It is always in your power to avoid these. No man, but a brute or a fool, will insult a woman with conversation which he sees gives her pain; nor will he dare to do it, if she resent the injury with a becoming spirit. There is a dignity in conscious virtue, which is able to awe the most shameless and abandoned of men.

You will be reproached perhaps with prudery. By prudery is usually meant an affectation of delicacy: Now I do not wish you to affect delicacy; I wish you to possess it: at any rate, it is better to run the risk of being thought ridiculous than disgusting.

The men will complain of your reserve. They will assure you, that a franker behaviour would make you more amiable. But, trust me, they are not sincere when they tell you so. I acknowledge, that, on some occasions, it might render you more agreeable as companions, but it would make you less amiable as women—an important distinction, which many of your sex are not aware of. After all, I wish you to have great ease and

openness in your conversation; I only point out some considerations, which ought to regulate your behaviour in that respect.

Have a sacred regard to truth. Lying is a mean and despicable vice. I have known some women of excellent parts, who were so much addicted to it, that they could not be trusted in the relation of any story, especially if it contained any thing of the marvellous. or if they themselves were the heroines of the tale. This weakness did not proceed from a bad heart, but was merely the effect vanity, or an unbridled imagination. I do not mean to censure that lively embellishment of a humorous story, which is only intended to promote innocent mirth.

There is a certain gentleness of spirit and manners, extremely engaging in your sex—not that indiscriminate attention, that unmeaning simper, which smiles on all alike. This arises either from an affectation of softness, or from perfect insipidity.

There is a species of refinement in luxury, just beginning to prevail among the gentlemen of this country, to which our ladies are yet as great strangers as any women upon earth; I hope, for the honour of the sex, that they may ever continue so; I mean the luxury of eating. It is a despicable, selfish vice in men; but in your sex it is, beyond expression, indelicate and disgusting.

Every one, who remembers a few years back, is sensible of a very striking change in the attention and respect formerly paid by the gentlemen to the ladies: their drawing-rooms are de-

served; and, after dinner and supper, the gentlemen are impatient till they retire. How they came to lose this respect, which nature and politeness so well entitle them to, I shall not here particularly enquire. The revolutions of manners in any country depend on causes very various and complicated. I shall only observe, that the behaviour of the ladies in the last age was very reserved and stately. It would now be reckoned ridiculously stiff and formal. Whatever it was, it had certainly the effect of making them more respected.

A fine woman, like other fine things in nature, has her proper point of view, from which she may be seen to most advantage. To fix this point requires great judgment, and an intimate knowledge of the human heart. By the present mode of female manners, the ladies seem to expect that they shall regain their ascendancy over us—by the fullest display of their personal charms—by being always in our eye at public places—by conversing with us, with the same unreserved freedom as we do with one another—in short, by resembling us as nearly as they possibly can—but a little time and experience will show the folly of this expectation and conduct.

The power of a fine woman over the hearts of men, of men of the finest parts, is even beyond what she conceives. They are sensible of the pleasing illusion; but they cannot, nor do they wish to dissolve it. But if she is determined to dispel the charm, it certainly is in her power; she may soon reduce the angel to a very ordinary girl.

There is a native dignity in ingenuous modesty to be expected in your sex, which is your natural protection from the familiarities of the men, and which you should feel, previous to the reflection, that it is your interest to keep yourselves sacred from all personal freedoms. The many nameless charms and endearments of beauty, should be reserved to bless the arms of the happy man, to whom you give your heart, but who, if he has the least delicacy, will despise them, if he knows that they have been prostituted to fifty men before him. The sentiment, that a woman may allow all innocent freedoms, provided her virtue is secure, is both grossly indelicate and dangerous, and has proved fatal to many of your sex.

Let me now recommend to your attention that elegance, which is not so much a quality itself, as the high polish of every other. It is what diffuses an ineffable grace over every look, every motion, every sentence you utter; it gives that charm to beauty, without which it generally fails to please. It is partly a personal quality, in which respect it is the gift of nature; but I speak of it principally as a quality of the mind. In a word, it is the perfection of taste in life and manners—every virtue and every excellency in their most graceful and amiable forms.

You may perhaps think, that I want to throw every spark of nature out of your composition, and to make you entirely artificial. Far from it. I wish you to possess the most perfect simplicity of heart and manners. I think you may possess

dignity without pride, affability without meanness, and simple elegance without affectation. Milton had my idea, when he says of Eve,

Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
In ev'ry gesture dignity and love.

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seldom fails to have an influence on the spirits and temper.—The finest geniuses, the most delicate minds, have very frequently a correspondent delicacy of bodily constitution, which they are too apt to neglect. Their luxury lies in reading and late hours, equal enemies to health and beauty.

But though good health be one of the greatest blessings of life, never make a boast of it, but enjoy it in grateful silence. We so naturally associate the idea of female softness and delicacy with a correspondent delicacy of constitution, that when a woman speaks of her great strength, her extraordinary appetite, her ability to bear excessive fatigue, we recoil at the description in a way she is little aware of.

The intention of your being taught needlework, knitting, and such like, is not on account of the intrinsic value of all you can do with your hands, which is trifling, but to enable you to judge more perfectly of that kind of work, and to direct the execution of it in others. Another principal end is, to enable you to fill up in a tolerably agreeable way, some of the many solitary hours you must necessarily pass at home. It is a great article in the happiness of life to have your pleasures as independent of others as possible.

By continually gadding abroad, in search of amusement, you lose the respect of all your acquaintances, whom you oppress with those visits which, by a more discreet management, might have been courted.

The domestic œconomy of a family is entirely

a woman's province, and furnishes a variety of subjects for the exertion both of good sense and good taste. If you ever come to have the charge of a family, it ought to engage much of your time and attention; nor can you be excused from this by any extent of fortune, though with a narrow one, the ruin that follows the neglect of it may be more immediate.

I am at the greatest loss what to advise you in regard to books. There is no impropriety in your reading history, or cultivating any art or science to which genius or accident lead you. The whole volume of nature lies open to your eye, and furnishes an infinite variety of entertainment. If I was sure that nature had given you such strong principles of taste and sentiment, as would remain with you, and influence your future conduct, with the utmost pleasure would I endeavour to direct your reading, in such a way, as might form that taste to the utmost perfection of truth and elegance. "But, when I reflect how easy it is to warm a girl's imagination, and how difficult deeply and permanently to affect her heart—how readily she enters into every refinement of sentiment, and how easily she can sacrifice them to vanity or convenience—I think I may very probably do you an injury, by artificially creating a taste, which, if nature never gave it you, would only serve to embarrass your future conduct, I do not want to *make* you any thing: I want to know what nature has made you, and to perfect you on her plan. I do not wish you to have sentiments that might perplex you; I wish you to have sen-

timents that may uniformly and steadily guide you, and such as your hearts so thoroughly approve, that you would not forego them for any consideration this world could offer.

Dress is an important article in female life. The love of dress is natural to you, and therefore it is proper and reasonable. Good sense will regulate your expense in it; and good taste will direct you to dress in such a way, as to conceal any blemishes, and set off your beauties, if you have any, to the greatest advantage. But much delicacy and judgment are required in the application of this rule. A fine woman shows her charms to most advantage, when she seems most to conceal them. The finest bosom in nature is not so fine as what imagination forms. The most perfect elegance of dress appears always the most easy, and the least studied.

Do not confine your attention to dress to your public appearances. Accustom yourselves to an habitual neatness, so that in the most careless undress, in your most unguarded hours, you may have no reason to be ashamed of your appearance. You will not easily believe how much we consider your dress as expressive of your characters. Vanity, levity, slovenliness, folly, appear through it. An elegant simplicity is an equal proof of taste and delicacy.

In dancing, the principal points you are to attend to, are ease and grace. I would have you to dance with spirit; but never allow yourselves to be so far transported with mirth, as to forget the delicacy of your sex. Many a girl, dancing in

the gaiety and innocence of her heart, is thought to discover a spirit she little dreams of.

I know no entertainment that gives such pleasure to any person of sentiment or humour, as the theatre. But I am sorry to say there are few English comedies a lady can see, without a shock to delicacy. You will not readily suspect the comments gentlemen make on your behaviour on such occasions. Men are often best acquainted with the most worthless of your sex, and from them too readily form their judgment of the rest. A virtuous girl often hears very indelicate things with a countenance nowise embarrassed, because in truth she does not understand them. Yet this is, most ungenerously, ascribed to that command of features, and that ready presence of mind, which you are thought to possess in a degree far beyond us; or, by still more malignant observers, it is ascribed to hardened effrontery.

Sometimes a girl laughs with all the simplicity of unsuspecting innocence, for no other reason but being infected with other people's laughing: she is then believed to know more than she should do. If she does happen to understand an improper thing, she suffers a very complicated distress; she feels her modesty hurt in the most sensible manner, and at the same time is ashamed of appearing conscious of the injury. The only way to avoid these inconveniencies, is never to go to a play that is particularly offensive to delicacy. Tragedy subjects you to no such distress. Its sorrows will soften and ennoble your hearts. I need not say little about gaming, the ladies in this country being as yet almost strangers to it.

It is a ruinous and incurable vice ; and as it leads to all the selfish and turbulent passions, is peculiarly odious in your sex. I have no objection to your playing a little at any kind of game, as a variety in your amusements, provided that what you can possibly lose is such a trifle as can neither interest you, nor hurt you.

In this, as well as in all important points of conduct, show a determined resolution and steadiness. This is not in the least inconsistent with that softness and gentleness so amiable in your sex. On the contrary, it gives that spirit to a mild and sweet disposition, without which it is apt to degenerate into insipidity. It makes you respectable in your own eyes.

FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, MARRIAGE.

THE luxury and dissipation that prevail in genteel life, as they corrupt the heart in many respects, so they render it incapable of warm, sincere, and steady friendship. A happy choice of friends will be of the utmost consequence to you, as they may assist you by their advice and good offices. But the immediate gratification which friendship affords to a warm, open, and ingenuous heart, is of itself a sufficient motive to court it.

In the choice of your friends, have your principal regard to goodness of heart and fidelity. If they also possess taste and genius, these will make them still more agreeable and useful companions. You have particular reasons to place confidence in those who have shown affection for you in your early days, when you were incapable of making them any return. This is an obligation for which you cannot be too grateful.—When you read this, you will naturally think of your mother's friend, to whom you owe so much.

If you have the good fortune to meet with any who deserve the name of friends, unbosom yourselves to them with the most unsuspecting confidence. It is one of the world's maxims, never to trust any person with a secret, the discovery of which could give you any pain: but it is the maxim of a little mind and cold heart, unless where it is the effect of frequent disappointments and bad usage. An open temper, if re-

strained but by tolerable prudence, will make you, on the whole, much happier than a reserved, suspicious one, although you may sometimes suffer by it. Coldness and distrust are but the too certain consequences of age and experience; but they are unpleasant feelings and need not be anticipated before their time.

But however open you may be in talking of your affairs, never disclose the secret of one friend to another. These are sacred deposits, which do not belong to you, nor have you any right to make use of them.

There is another case, in which I suspect it is proper to be secret, not so much from motives of prudence, as delicacy; I mean in love matters. Though a woman has no reason to be ashamed of an attachment to a man of merit, yet nature, whose authority is superior to philosophy, has annexed a sense of shame to it. It is even long before a woman of delicacy dare avow to her own heart that she loves; and when all the subterfuges of ingenuity to conceal it from herself, fail, she feels a violence done both to her pride and to her modesty. This, I should imagine, must always be the case where she is not sure of a return to her attachment.

In such a situation, to lay the heart open to any person whatever, does not appear to me consistent with the perfection of female delicacy. But perhaps I am in the wrong. At the same time I must tell you, that in point of prudence, it concerns you to attend well to the consequences of such a discovery. These secrets, however important in your own estimation, may

appear very trifling to your friend, who possibly will not enter into your feelings, but may rather consider them as a subject of pleasantry. For this reason, love secrets are of all others the worst kept. But the consequences to you may be very serious, as no man of spirit and delicacy ever valued a heart much hackneyed in the ways of love.

If, therefore, you must have a friend to pour out your heart to, be sure of her honour and secrecy. Let her not be a married woman, especially if she lives happily with her husband. There are certain unguarded moments, in which such a woman, though the best and worthiest of her sex, may let hints escape, which, at other times, or to any other person than her husband, she would be incapable of; nor will a husband in this case feel himself under the same obligation of secrecy and honour, as if you had put your confidence originally in himself, especially on a subject which the world is apt to treat so lightly.

If all other circumstances are equal, there are obvious advantages in your making friends of one another. The ties of blood, and your being so much united in one common interest, form an additional bond of union to your friendship. If your brothers should have the good fortune to have hearts susceptible of friendship, to possess truth, honour, sense, and delicacy of sentiment, they are the fittest and most unexceptionable confidants. By placing confidence in them, you will receive every advantage which you could hope for from the friendship of men, without any of

the inconveniencies that attend such connexions with our sex.

Beware of making confidants of your servants. Dignity not properly understood very readily degenerates into pride, which enters into no friendship, because it cannot bear an equal, and is so fond of flattery as to grasp at it even from servants and dependants. The most intimate confidants, therefore, of proud people, are valets-de-chambre and waiting women. Show the utmost humanity to your servants; make their situation as comfortable to them as possible; but if you make them your confidants, you spoil them, and debase yourselves.

Never allow any person, under the pretended sanction of friendship, to be so familiar as to lose a proper respect to you. Never allow them to tease you on any subject that is disagreeable, or where you have once taken your resolution. Many will tell you, that this reserve is consistent with the freedom which friendship allows: but a certain respect is as necessary in friendship as in love. Without it you may be liked as a child, but you will never be beloved as an equal.

The temper and disposition of the heart in your sex make you enter more readily and warmly into friendships than men. Your natural propensity to it is so strong, that you often run into intimacies which you soon have sufficient cause to repent of; and this makes your friendships so very fluctuating.

Another great obstacle to the sincerity as well as steadiness of your friendships, is the great clashing of your interests, in the pursuits of

love, ambition, or vanity. For these reasons, it would appear, at first view, more eligible for you to contract your friendships with the men. Among other obvious advantages of an easy intercourse between the two sexes, it occasions an emulation and exertion in each to excel and be agreeable; hence their respective excellencies are mutually communicated and blended. As their interests in no degree interfere, there can be no foundation for jealousy, or suspicion of rivalship. The friendship of a man for a woman is always blended with tenderness, which he never feels for one of his own sex, even where love is in no degree concerned. Besides, we are conscious of a natural title you have to our protection and good offices, and therefore we feel an additional obligation of honour to serve you, and to observe an inviolable secrecy, whenever you confide in us.

But apply these observations with great caution.—Thousands of women of the best hearts and finest parts have been ruined by men, who approached them under the specious name of friendship. But supposing a man to have the most undoubted honour, yet his friendship to a woman is so near a-kin to love, that if she be very agreeable in her person, she will probably very soon find a lover, where she only wished to meet a friend. Let me here, however, warn you against that weakness so common among vain women—the imagination that every man, who takes particular notice of you, is a lover. Nothing can expose you more to ridicule than taking up a man on the suspicion of being your lover, who perhaps never once thought of you in

that view, and giving yourselves those airs so common among all silly women on such occasions.

There is a kind of unmeaning gallantry much practised by some men, which, if you have any discernment, you will find really very harmless. Men of this sort will attend you to public places, and be useful to you by a number of little observances, which those of a superior class does not so well understand, or have not leisure to regard, or perhaps are too proud to submit to. Look on the compliments of such men as words of course, which they repeat to every agreeable woman of their acquaintance. There is a familiarity they are apt to assume, which a proper dignity in your behaviour will be easily able to check.

There is a different species of men, whom you may like as agreeable companions, men of worth, taste, and genius, whose conversation, in some respects, may be superior to what you generally meet with among your own sex. It will be foolish in you to deprive yourselves of an useful and agreeable acquaintance merely because idle people say he is your lover. Such a man may like your company, without having any design on your persons.

People whose sentiments, and particularly whose tastes correspond, naturally like to associate together, although none of them have the most distant view of any further connexion. But as this similarity of minds often gives rise to a more tender attachment than friendship. It will be prudent to keep a watchful eye over your-

selves, lest your hearts become too far engaged before you are aware of it. At the same time I do not think that your sex, at least in this part of the world, have much of that sensibility which disposes to such attachments. What is commonly called love among you, is rather gratitude, and a partiality for the man who prefers you to the rest of your sex : and such a man you often marry, with little of either personal esteem or affection. Indeed, without an unusual share of natural sensibility, and very peculiar good fortune, a woman in this country has very little probability of marrying for love.*

It is a maxim laid down among you, and a very prudent one it is, that love is not to begin on your part; but is entirely to be the consequence of our attachment to you. Now, supposing a woman to have sense and taste, she will not find many men to whom she can possibly be supposed to bear any considerable share of esteem. Among these few, it is a very great chance if any of them distinguishes her particularly.— Love, at least with us, is exceedingly capricious and will not always fix where reason says it should. But supposing one of them should become particularly attached to her, it is still extremely improbable that he should be the man in the world her heart most approves of.

As, therefore, nature has not given you that unlimited range in your choice which we enjoy, she has wisely and benevolently assigned to you

* These observations are happily inapplicable in America, although perfectly just in Great-Britain.

a greater flexibility of taste on this subject. Some agreeable qualities recommend a gentleman to your common good liking and friendship. In the course of his acquaintance, he contracts an attachment to you. When you perceive it, it excites your gratitude: this gratitude rises into a preference: and this preference, perhaps, at last advances into some degree of attachment, especially if it meets with crosses and difficulties; for these and a state of suspense, are very great incitements to attachment, and are the food of love in both sexes.—If attachment was not excited in your sex in this manner, there is not one in a million of you, that could ever marry with any degree of love.

A man of taste and delicacy marries a woman, because he loves her more than any other. A woman of equal taste and delicacy, marries him because she esteems him, and because he gives her that preference. But if a man unfortunately becomes attached to a woman whose heart is secretly pre-engaged, his attachment, instead of obtaining a suitable return, is particularly offensive; and if he persists to tease her, he makes himself equally the object of her scorn and aversion.

The effects of love among men are diversified by their different tempers. An artful man may counterfeit every one of them so easily, as to impose on a young girl of an open, generous, and feeling heart, if she be not extremely on her guard. The finest parts in such a girl may not always prove sufficient for her security. The dark and crooked paths of cunning are unsearch-

able and inconceivable to an honourable and elevated mind.

The following, I apprehend, are the most genuine effects of an honorable passion among the men, and the most difficult to counterfeit. A man of delicacy often betrays his passion by his too great anxiety to conceal it, especially if he has little hopes of success. True love, in all its stages, seeks concealment, and never expects success. It renders a man not only respectful, but timid to the highest degree, in his behaviour to the woman he loves. To conceal the awe she inspires him with, he may sometimes affect pleasantry; but it sits awkwardly on him, and he quickly relapses into seriousness, if not into dulness. He magnifies all her real perfections in his imagination, and is either blind to her failings, or converts them into beauties. Like a person conscious of guilt, he is jealous that every eye observes his; and to avoid this, he shuns all the little observances of common gallantry.

His heart and his character will be improved in every respect by his attachment. His manners will become more gentle, and his conversation more agreeable: but diffidence and embarrassment will always make him appear to disadvantage in the company of his mistress. If the fascination continues long, it will totally depress his spirits, and extinguish every active, vigorous, and manly principle of his mind. You will find this subject beautifully and pathetically painted in Thomson's Spring.

When you observe, in a gentleman's behaviour, these marks which I have described.

above, reflect seriously what you are to do. If his attachment be agreeable to you, I leave you to do as nature, good sense and delicacy shall direct you. If you love him, let me advise you never to discover to him the full extent of your love—no, not although you marry him. That sufficiently shows your preference, which is all he is entitled to know. If he has delicacy, he will ask for no stronger proof of affection, for your sake; if he has sense, he will not ask it for his own. This is an unpleasant truth; but it is my duty to let you know it. Violent love cannot subsist, at least cannot be expressed, for any time together, on both sides; otherwise the certain consequences, however concealed, is satiety and disgust. Nature in this case has laid the reserve on you.

If you see evident proof of a gentleman's attachment, and are determined to shut your heart against him, as you ever hope to be used with generosity by the person who shall engage your own heart, treat him honourably and humanely. Do not let him linger in a miserable suspense; but be anxious to let him know your sentiments with regard to him.

However people's hearts may deceive them, there is scarcely a person that can love for any time, without at least some distant hope of success. If you really wish to undeceive a lover, you may do it in a variety of ways. There is a certain species of easy familiarity in your behaviour, which may satisfy him, if he has any discernment left, that he has nothing to hope for. But perhaps your particular temper may not admit of

this: you may easily show that you want to avoid his company; but if he be a man whose friendship you wish to preserve, you may not choose this method, because then you lose him in every capacity. You may get a common friend to explain matters to him, or fall on many other devices, if you be seriously anxious to put him out of suspense.

But if you be resolved against every such method, at least do not shun opportunities of letting him explain himself. If you do this you act barbarously and unjustly. If he brings you to an explanation, give him a polite, but resolute and decisive answer. In whatever way you convey your sentiments to him, if he is a man of spirit and delicacy, he will give you no further trouble, nor apply to your friends for their intercession. This last is a method of courtship, which every man of spirit will disdain. He will never whine nor sue for your pity: that would mortify him almost as much as your scorn. In short, you may possibly break such a heart, but you can never bend it. Great pride always accompanies delicacy, however concealed under the appearance of the utmost gentleness and modesty, and is the passion of all others the most difficult to conquer.

There is a case, where a woman may coquette justifiably to the utmost verge which her conscience will allow. It is where a gentleman purposely declines to make his addresses, till such time as he thinks himself perfectly sure of her consent. This at bottom, is intended to force a woman to give up the undoubted privilege of her sex, the privilege of refusing; it is indeed

to force her to explain herself, in effect before the gentleman deigns to do it, and by this means oblige her to violate the modesty and delicacy of her sex, and to invert the clearest order of nature. All this sacrifice is proposed to be made merely to gratify a most despicable vanity, in a man who would degrade the very woman whom he wishes to make his wife.

It is of great importance to distinguish whether a gentleman, who has the appearance of being your lover, delays to speak explicitly from the motive I have mentioned, or from a diffidence inseparable from true attachment. In the one case, you can scarcely use him too ill: in the other, you ought to use him with great kindness: and the greatest kindness you can show him, if you are determined not to listen to his addresses, is to let him know it as soon as possible.

I know the many excuses with which women endeavour to justify themselves to the world, and to their own consciences, when they act otherwise. Sometimes they plead ignorance, or at least uncertainty, of the gentleman's real sentiments. That may sometimes be the case. Sometimes they plead the decorum of their sex, which enjoins an equal behaviour to all men, and forbids them to consider any man as a lover till he has directly told them so. Perhaps few women carry their ideas of female delicacy and decorum so far as I do. But I must say, you are not entitled to plead the obligation of these virtues, in opposition to the superior ones of gratitude, justice, and humanity. The man is entitled to all these, who prefers you to the rest of your sex,

and perhaps whose greatest weakness is this very preference.

The truth of the matter is, vanity, and the love of admiration, are such prevailing passions among you, that you may be considered to make a very great sacrifice, whenever you give up a lover, till every art of coquetry fails to keep him, or till he forces you to an explanation. You can be fond of the love, when you are indifferent to, or even when you despise, the lover.

But the deepest and most artful coquetry is employed by women of superior taste and sense, to engage and fix the heart of a man whom the world and whom they themselves esteem, although they are firmly determined never to marry him. But his conversation amuses them, and his attachment is the highest gratification to their vanity: nay, they can sometimes be gratified with the utter ruin of his fortune, fame, and happiness. God forbid I should ever think so of all your sex! I know many of them have principles, have generosity and dignity of soul, that elevate them above the worthless vanity I have been speaking of.

Such a woman, I am persuaded, may always convert a lover, if she cannot give him her affections, into a warm and steady friend, provided he is a man of sense, resolution, and candour. If she explain herself with a generous openness and freedom, he must feel the stroke as a man; but he will likewise bear it as a man: what he suffers, he will suffer in silence. Every sentiment of esteem will remain: but love, though it requires very little food, and is easily surfeited with

too much, yet it requires some. He will view her in the light of a married woman; and though passion subsides, yet a man of a candid and generous heart always retains a tenderness for a woman he has once loved, and who has used him well, beyond what he feels for any other of her sex.

If he has not confided his own secret to any body, he has an undoubted title to ask you not to divulge it. If a woman choose to trust any of her companions with her own unfortunate attachments, she may, as it is her own affair alone: but if she has any generosity or gratitude, she will not betray a secret which does not belong to her.

Male coquetry is much more inexcusable than female, as well as more pernicious; but it is rare in this country. Very few men will give themselves the trouble to gain or retain any woman's affections, unless they have views on them either of an honourable or dishonourable kind. Men employed in the pursuits of business, ambition, or pleasure, will not give themselves the trouble to engage a woman's affections, merely from the vanity of conquest, and of triumphing over the heart of an innocent and defenceless girl. Besides, people never value much what is entirely in their power. A man of parts, sentiment, and address, if he lay aside all regard to truth and humanity, may engage the hearts of fifty women at the same-time, and may likewise conduct his coquetry with so much art, as to put it out of the power of any of them to specify a single expression that could be said to be directly expressive of love.

This ambiguity of behaviour, this art of keep

ing one in suspense, is the great secret of coquetry in both sexes. It is the more cruel in us, because we can carry it to what length we please and continue it as long as we please, without your being so much as at liberty to complain or expostulate; whereas we can break our chain, and force you to explain, whenever we become impatient of our situation.

I have insisted the more particularly on this subject of courtship, because it may most readily happen to you at that early period, of life, when you can have little experience or knowledge of the world; when your passions are warm, and your judgments not arrived at such full maturity as to be able to correct them. I wish you to possess such high principles of honour and generosity, as will render you incapable of deceiving, and at the same time to possess that acute discernment which may secure you against being deceived.

A woman in this country may easily prevent the first impressions of love; and every motive of prudence and delicacy should make her guard her heart against them, till such time as she has received the most convincing proofs of the attachment of a man of such merit, as will justify a reciprocal regard. Your hearts, indeed, may be shut inflexibly and permanently against all the merit a man can possess. That may be your misfortune, but cannot be your fault. In such a situation you would be equally unjust to yourself and your lover, if you give him your hand, when your heart revolted against him. But miserable will be your fate, if you allow an attach-

ment to steal on you before you are sure of a return; or, what is infinitely worse, where there are wanting those qualities which alone can insure happiness in a married state.

I know nothing that renders a woman more despicable, than her thinking it essential to happiness to be married. Besides the gross indelicacy of the sentiment, it is a false one, as thousands of women have experienced. But if it were true, the belief that it is so, and the consequent impatience to be married, is the most effectual way to prevent it.

You must not think from this, that I do not wish you to marry; on the contrary, I am of opinion, that you may attain a superior degree of happiness in a married state, to what you can possibly find in any other. I know the forlorn and unprotected situation of an old maid, the chagrin and peevishness which are apt to infect their tempers, and the great difficulty of making a transition, with dignity and cheerfulness, from the period of youth, beauty, admiration, and respect into the calm, silent, unnoticed retreat of declining years.

I see some unmarried women, of active, vigorous minds, and great vivacity of spirits, degrading themselves; sometimes by entering into a dissipated course of life, unsuitable to their years, and exposing themselves to the ridicule of girls, who might have been their grand-children; sometimes by oppressing their acquaintances by impertinent intrusions into their private affairs; and sometimes by being the propagators of scandal and defamation. All this is owing to

an exuberant activity of spirit, which, if it had found employment at home, would have rendered them respectable and useful members of society.

I see other women, in the same situation, gentle, modest, blessed with sense, taste, delicacy, and every milder feminine virtue of the heart, but of weak spirits, bashful, and timid; I see such women sinking into obscurity and insignificance, and gradually losing every elegant accomplishment; for this evident reason, that they are not united to a partner who has sense, and worth, and taste, to know their value; one who is able to draw forth their concealed qualities, and show them to advantage, who can give that support to their feeble spirits, which they stand so much in need of; and who, by his affection and tenderness, might make such a woman happy, in exerting every talent, and accomplishing herself in every elegant art, that could contribute to his amusement.

In short, I am of opinion, that a married state, if entered in from proper motives of esteem and affection, will be the happiest for yourselves, make you most respectable in the eyes of the world, and the most useful members of society; but I confess I am not enough of a patriot, to wish you to marry for the good of the public;—I wish you to marry for no other reason, but to make yourselves happier. When I am so particular in my advices about your conduct, I know my heart beats with the fond hopes of making you worthy the attachment of men who will deserve you, and be sensible of your merit. But heaven forbid you

should ever relinquish the ease and independence of a single life, to become the slaves of a fool or a tyrant's caprice.

As these have always been my sentiments, I shall do you but justice, when I leave you in such independent circumstances, as may lay you under no temptation to do from necessity what you would never do from choice. This will likewise save you from that cruel mortification to a woman of spirit, the suspicion that a gentleman thinks he does you an honour or a favour, when he asks you for his wife.

If I live till you arrive at that age when you shall be capable to judge for yourselves, and do not strangely alter my sentiments, I shall act towards you in a very different manner from what most parents do. My opinion has always been, that when that period arrives, the parental authority ceases.

I hope I shall always treat you with that affection and easy confidence, which may dispose you to look on me as your friend; in that capacity alone I shall think myself entitled to give you my opinion; in the doing of which, I should think myself highly criminal, if I did not, to the utmost of my power, endeavour to divest myself of all personal vanity, and all prejudices in favour of my particular taste. If you did not choose to follow my advice, I should not, on that account, cease to love you as my children: though my right to your obedience was expired, yet I should think nothing could release me from the ties of nature and humanity.

You may, perhaps, imagine, that the reserved

behaviour which I recommend to you, and your appearing seldom at public places, must cut off all opportunities of your being acquainted with gentlemen; I am very far from intending this. I advise you to no reserve but what will render you more respected and beloved by our sex. I do not think public places suited to make people acquainted together: they can only be distinguished there by their looks and external behaviour; but it is in private companies alone, that you can expect easy and agreeable conversation, which I would never wish you to decline. If you do not allow gentlemen to become acquainted with you, you can never expect to marry with attachment on either side. Love is very seldom produced at first sight, at least it must have, in that case, a very unjustifiable foundation. True love is founded on esteem, in a correspondence of tastes and sentiments, and steals on the heart imperceptibly.

There is one advice I shall leave you, to which I beg your particular attention:—Before your affections come to be in the least engaged to any man, examine your tempers, your tastes, and your hearts, very severely, and settle in your own minds, what are the requisites to your happiness in a married state; and, as it is almost impossible that you should get every thing you wish, come to a steady determination what you are to consider as essential, and what may be sacrificed.

If you have hearts disposed by nature for love and friendship, and possess those feelings which enable you to enter into all the refinements and

delicacies of these attachments, consider well, for heaven's sake, and as you value your future happiness, before you give them any indulgence. If you have the misfortune (for a very great misfortune it commonly is to your sex) to have such a temper and such sentiments deeply rooted in you, if you have spirit and resolution to resist the solicitations of vanity, the persecutions of friends (for you will have lost the only friend that would never persecute you) and can support the prospect of the many inconveniencies attending the state of an old maid, which I formerly pointed out, then you may indulge yourselves in that kind of sentimental reading and conversation which is most correspondent to your feelings.

But if you find, on a strict self examination, that marriage is absolutely essential to your happiness, keep the secret inviolable in your own bosoms, for the reasons I formerly mentioned: but shun, as you would do the most fatal poison, all that species of reading and conversation which warms the imagination, which engages and softens the heart, and raises the taste above the level of common life: if you do otherwise, consider the terrible conflict of passions this may afterwards raise in your breasts.

If this refinement once takes deep root in your minds, and you do not obey its dictates, but marry from vulgar and mercenary views, you may never be able to eradicate it entirely, and then it will embitter all your married days: Instead of meeting with sense, delicacy, tenderness, a lover, a friend, and equal companion, in

a husband, you may be tired with insipidity and dulness, shocked with indelicacy, or mortified by indifference. You will find none to compassionate or even understand your sufferings, for your husbands may not use you cruelly, and may give you as much money for your clothes, personal expense, and domestic necessaries, as is suitable to their fortunes. The world would therefore look on you as unreasonable women, and that did not deserve to be happy, if you were not so. To avoid these complicated evils, if you are determined at all events to marry, I would advise you to make all your reading and amusements of such kind, as do not affect the heart nor the imagination, except in the way of wit or humour.

I have no view by these advices to lead your tastes; I only want to persuade you of the necessity of knowing your own minds, which, though seemingly very easy, is what your sex seldom attain on many important occasions in life, but particularly on this of which I am speaking. There is not a quality I more anxiously wish you to possess, than that collected, decisive spirit, which rests on itself, which enables you to see where your true happiness lies, and to pursue it with the most determined resolution. In matters of business, follow the advice of those who know them better than yourselves, and in whose integrity you can confide; but in matters of taste, that depend on your own feeling, consult no one friend whatever, but consult your own hearts.

If a gentleman makes his addresses to you or gives you reason to believe he will do so, before you allow your affection to be engaged, endea-

your in the most prudent and secret manner, to procure from your friends every necessary piece of information concerning him; such as his character for sense, his morals, his temper, fortune, and family; whether he is distinguished for parts and worth, or for folly, knavery, and leathsome hereditary diseases. When your friends inform you of these, they have fulfilled their duty. If they go farther, they have not deference for you, which a becoming dignity on your part would effectually command.

Whatever your views are in marrying, take every possible precaution to prevent their being disappointed. If fortune and the pleasures it brings, are your aim, it is not sufficient that the settlements of a jointure and children's provisions be ample, and properly secured; it is necessary that you should enjoy the fortune during your own life. The principal security you can have for this will depend on your marrying a good-natured, generous man, who despises money, and who will let you live where you can best enjoy that pleasure. that pomp and parade of life, for which you married him.

From what I have said, you will easily see that I could never pretend to advise whom you should marry; but I can with great confidence advise whom you should not marry.

Avoid a companion that may entail any hereditary disease on your posterity, particularly (that most dreadful of all human calamities) madness. It is the height of imprudence to run into such a danger, and, in my opinion, highly criminal.

Do not marry a fool; he is the most intractable of all animals; he is led by his passions and

caprices, and incapable of hearing the voice of reason. It may probably, too, hurt your vanity to have husbands for whom you have reason to blush and tremble, every time they open their lips in company. But the worst circumstance that attends a fool, is his constant jealousy of his wife being thought to govern him. This renders it impossible to lead him; and he is continually doing absurd and disagreeable things, for no other reason but to show he dares do them.

A rake is always a suspicious husband, because he has only known the most worthless of your sex. He likewise entails the worst diseases on his wife and children, if he has the misfortune to have any.

If you have a sense of religion yourselves, do not think of husbands who have none. If they have tolerable understandings, they will be glad that you have religion, for their own sakes, and for the sakes of their families; but it will sink you in their esteem. If they are weak men, they will be continually teasing and shocking you about your principles.—If you have children, you will suffer the most bitter distress in seeing all your endeavours to form their minds to virtue and piety, all your endeavours to secure their present and eternal happiness, frustrated and turned into ridicule.

As I look on your choice of a husband to be of the greatest consequence to your happiness, I hope you will make it with the utmost circumspection. Do not give way to a sudden sally of passion, and dignify it with the name of love.—Genuine love is not founded in caprice; it is

founded in nature, on honourable views, on virtue, on similarity of tastes, and sympathy of souls.

If you have these sentiments, you will never marry any one, when you are not in that situation, in point of fortune, which is necessary to the happiness of either of you. What that competency may be, can only be determined by your own tastes. It would be ungenerous in you to take advantage of a lover's attachment, to plunge him into distress; and if he has any honour, no personal gratification will ever tempt him to enter into any connexion which will render you unhappy. If you have as much between you, as to satisfy all your demands, it is sufficient.

I shall conclude with endeavouring to remove a difficulty which must naturally occur to any woman of reflection on the subject of marriage. What is to become of all those refinements of delicacy, that dignity of manners, which checked all familiarities, and suspended desire in respectful and awful admiration? In answer to this, I shall only observe, that if motives of interest or vanity have had any share in your resolutions to marry, none of these chimerical notions will give you any pain: nay, they will very quickly appear as ridiculous in your own eyes, as they probably always did in the eyes of your husbands. They have been sentiments which have floated in your imagination, but have never reached your hearts. But if these sentiments have been truly genuine, and if you have had the singular happy fate to attach those who understand them, you have no reason to be afraid.

Marriage, indeed, will at once dispel the en-

chantment raised by external beauty; but the virtues and graces that first warmed the heart, that reserve and delicacy which always left the lover something further to wish, and often made him doubtful of your sensibility or attachment, may and ought ever to remain. The tumult of passion will necessarily subdue: but it will be succeeded by endearment, that affects the heart in a more equal, more sensible, and tender manner. But I must check myself and not indulge in descriptions, that may mislead you, and that too sensibly awake the remembrance of my happier days, which, perhaps, it were better for me to forget for ever.

I have thus given you my opinion on some of the most important articles of your future life, chiefly calculated for that period when you are just entering the world. I have endeavoured to avoid some peculiarities of opinion, which, from their contradiction to the general practice of the world, I might reasonably have suspected were not so well founded. But in writing to you, I am afraid my heart has been too full, and too warmly interested, to allow me to keep this resolution. This may have produced some embarrassments and some seeming contradictions. What I have written has been the amusement of some solitary hours, and has served to divert some melancholy reflections.—I am conscious I undertook a task to which I was very unequal; but I have discharged a part of my duty.—You will, at least, be pleased with it, as the last mark of your father's love and attention.

RUDIMENTS OF TASTE.

PREFACE

TO THE
READER.

CORNELIA, daughter of Scipio Africanus, and mother of the Gracchi, was not more distinguished by the nobility of her rank, than by the lustre of those virtues which adorned her character—a most pleasing and amiable trait of which shines in that little incident recorded to her immortal honour. A lady of Ionia coming one day to visit her, impatiently expected to be shewn the splendour and magnificence of her toilette, which she supposed, from her rank and fortune, to be very superb. The illustrious Roman prolonged the conversation till her children were at hand, and then introducing them to her visitor—“These, says she, are my jewels.”

The writer of these letters has so great a veneration for the domestic character of this lady, that she thinks she cannot do better than give them to the public, under the signature of Cornelia. And whatever their other defects may be, they have this at least to recommend them, that the same sentiments of maternal tenderness which influenced the Roman Matron, gave rise to these epistles, and prompted a fond Mother to become an Author.

LETTER I.

A DESIRE of happiness is the first propensity of the heart.—It is born with us, and to attempt its suppression were equally fruitless and wrong: for the Author of Nature has done nothing in vain, and the happiness he has imprinted on the mind so clear an idea of, has somewhere an existence.

Hitherto you have obeyed the impulse of nature in the artless pursuits of childhood: but the time is at hand, when this sweet tranquillity will be interrupted by the bustle of the world, which will not longer permit you to repose in the simple amusements of dressing dolls, pursuing butterflies, or plucking daisies. Sweet dear delights of innocence: on which, as you climb the rugged heights of life, you will look back with fond regret.

But we are not born for ourselves alone; and therefore have duties to perform, obligations to discharge, and difficulties to encounter; in the course of which, many a severe check is given to this happiness which we all so ardently seek; yet the desire of it will even acquire strength by the repulse, and there was never yet a wretch who had found it diminished by misfortune. I wish the success of this passion could be shewn as demonstrable as its existence.

But the truth is, all mankind are running after the same object, though in such opposite directions, that if it were not for their concurrent testimony, it would be scarce credible that they had

each the same view. Yet it is the fate of most of them to sit down, at last, in the very same disposition which Solomon was in when he complained, rather peevishly it must be owned, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Man walks indeed in a vain shadow, and 'tis pitiable to reflect that a being of so transient a duration should yet waste the trifling portion of time allotted him in vain and fruitless pursuits, and after all the schemes of the sanguine, and the labours of the active, to find the desired attainment as far off as ever.

But this has been the case of millions, and I am afraid will still continue to be so, at least till we are unanimous in deciding on that grand point wherein this good, of which we have all so high an idea, consists: an agreement from which, alas, we are at the farthest distance imaginable. And here, my dearest girls, lies the whole of the mistake. The Creator has not been wanting to provide a happiness exalted as the mind itself can conceive; but man himself errs in the pursuit of it; some placing it in riches, some in power, scarcely one in an age supposing it to be where it really is—in the practice of virtue.

But while the human heart is set on acquisitions, in which it can find no satisfaction if attained, the span of life must necessarily be passed in restless anxieties and melancholy disappointment. It was the aim of philosophy, to draw just estimates of things, and to prevent its pupils from being dazzled with the splendor of wealth and power; it taught that the sovereign good was to be found in rectitude of will. It would be

a shame for us to be at a loss on such an important subject, who have received lessons from a much better master than ever gave lectures in the schools of Athens.

Rest assured that in the exercise of social and religious duties, the mind will find her solid happiness. Wandering in restless search, like Noah's dove, 'tis here she finds at length the welcome olive, the branch whose verdure blooms for immortality. Should you doubt the assertion, be prevailed on at least to try the experiment.

Your's, &c.

CORNELIA.

LETTER II.

PLEASURE has something so alluring in the very name. that it is not surprizing it finds so great a number of votaries. On no account would I have you insensible to its attractions, but rather lead you to its flowery paths, and conduct you to the most refined delights. These however you can never obtain, except you are guided in the choice by taste and judgment. A taste in pleasure is necessary for the selection of such as are above the enquiries of the vulgar, suitable to delicate and refined minds, and correspondent to the noblest sentiments; of course dependant more on intellectual, than on corporeal faculties. Taste never fails to reject whatever is gross and

sensual; yet even among the more refined pleasures, a sound judgment is wanted, to discriminate the solid and rational, from the frivolous and fastidious. The elegant hand of fashionable dissipation has often given a polish to what, in its own nature, can never deserve the name of pleasure.

Under this head must be comprehended the various species of fashionable amusements, which are injurious either to health or fortune. One would scarcely suppose such pursuits as these should ever be dignified with the name of pleasure. Yet when numbers are daily seen hazard-**ing**, not only extravagant sums, but peace of mind also, at the gaming-table—When the order of nature is inverted, and the refreshments of repose are bartered for midnight routs, we must conclude that such valuable sacrifices are not made but with the expectation of some supreme pleasure to reward them: how seldom such rewards are found, can best be determined by the testimony of the dissipated and gay, who after they have wasted the most valuable blessings of life, as time, health, spirits, &c. will generally confess that they have never found the satisfactions they sought after.

To be able to divest real enjoyment from the false glosses the world has put upon it, is a piece of wisdom, becoming a philosopher; but it is a piece of wisdom, you, my dear girls, must also acquire, if you expect to be happy. Fashion has arrogated to itself the prerogative of fixing the criterion of pleasure; but fashion is often a dangerous director, and is at best an imperfect

one; for who has a power of effectually biasing the natural disposition of another: if therefore what is called amusement be not agreeable to the real turn of the mind, it ceases to be viewed in that light, and can only be considered as an irksome conformity to the tastes of others.

Yet, abject as such a submission undoubtedly is, there are thousands who voluntarily yield to it who are content to live, move, and act, not as they like themselves, but as the polite world thinks fit to dictate. I am no advocate for affected singularity in things merely indifferent; but when the idle fashion breaks in upon the rules of virtue (as it too often does) or the true enjoyment of life, this is so mean a slavery that a rational being might be expected to despise it.

When therefore reason and religion have given the clue to your pleasures, resolve always to have them of your own choosing, and not of other people's. The sanction of numbers is the cause that draws youth from virtue and happiness; reason, when aided by a proper education, would, if left to herself, point out the way to both.

There are pleasures, my dear girls, to be met with in this journey of life, pure and sublime ones too, if we look for them through the medium of unvitiated taste. Did you ever discharge a social duty, but upon looking into your heart, you there perceived a glow of satisfaction? But, if you aim at more exalted, more rapturous sensations, give full scope to the impulses of benevolence: try what it is to heal the broken-hearted: diffuse joy through the mansions of sorrow, and rescue merit from the pressure of indigence and

misfortune.—These employments are capable of yielding pleasures suitable to the most exalted capacities, boundless as the most sanguine imagination can paint them.

But if so vast a multitude has erred in the pursuit of pleasure, through levity, not an inconsiderable number, of a very opposite temper, are at equally as great a distance from it: these are the morose and cynical, who will not condescend to the sober satisfactions that are to be found in a domestic circle, where the social affections are cultivated: if the gay and volatile mistake the nature of pleasure, these seem to question its very existence, and pass through life without stooping to pick up one of the fair blossoms which nature has scattered in the way.

Ever be your hearts open to the sweet emotions of social love, and you will not have cause to complain that the path of human life affords nothing but briars and thorns.

Nor is it from the relative duties alone we can derive happiness; the amusing, the interesting book of nature is open to all who can read it: here you meet with eternal variety, order, and beauty; a thousand charms await the mind which possesses a taste for simple pleasures; to such the whole creation is a boundless source of rational amusements. Happy, ineffably happy, they who can be pleased with artless nature, and contemplate with delight, the noble imagery with which she abounds. For my part, I should desire no greater proof of the purity and elegance of your taste, than to hear you speak in raptures of the graceful foliage of a wood, the beauty of a

lawn, or any of those charming rural scenes which are so often over-looked for the far less nobler productions of art.

Esteem me ever the most affectionate of your friends.

CORNELIA.

LETTER III.

EVERY one knows that human life is exposed to various miseries; but every one does not know, at least does not consider, that the far greater part of these miseries spring from the passions: yet the passions, you reply, are implanted in us by nature—we cannot eradicate them.

That is true; you cannot eradicate the passions, nor is it expedient you should; for as we are the workmanship of Infinite Wisdom, so doubtless the propensities He has formed us with, are in themselves very good: but then their good or ill tendency must be determined by this single question, Whether they govern us, or we govern them? In the latter case they resemble those salutary breezes, which waft health and sweetness on their wings: in the former they may be compared to certain hurricanes, which tear up all before them, and deform the beautiful aspect of the most luxuriant climates. There is more felicity to be found in the world than is often supposed; but never let us pretend to look for it before we have silenced the passions; the perpe-

tual contention we must have with them will else interrupt our successful search.

Pride, my dear girls, is a vice that springs up in the mind, almost without her attending to it: its characters are an immoderate self-love, conceitedness, and arrogance, with a profound contempt of every other person; ever insatiable in its desire of respect, extremely susceptible of the slightest affronts, and jealous of the least tribute of applause paid to another. Persons of this cast cannot in the nature of things be happy, as they may be said to live in a state of hostility with all the world: like Ishmael, they have their hands against every man, and every man's hand is against them.

Ambition condemns its wretched votary to forego the sweets of content and present ease, for the uneasy dreams of rank and power. It is happy for the world when fate denies to the ambitious that power to which their desires are perpetually aspiring. Innumerable are the horrid deeds, which the historic page records, that have been perpetrated by the impulse of this restless passion; yet if in pity to mankind, its direful effects are restrained, still the bosom where it rages must be a prey to inexpressible agonies.

Envy is a natural attendant on pride and ambition: it has very aptly been compared to a vulture preying on the vitals, and there could not possibly have been devised a more expressive similitude. That mind which is capable of regarding with the least degree of regret, the more fortunate acquirements of another, has a perpe-

tual source of disquietude, and must for ever pine beneath the inexpressible misery, which is both the consequence and the punishment of so base a propensity. As envy is the meanest of all the passions, so in its own nature it is the most opposite to happiness.

Covetousness is a vice that absorbs every finer feeling of the soul. Whatever sordid satisfaction the miser may feel in amassing his treasures, yet the cares which unavoidably attend it, and the solicitude the preservation of it demands, more than balance the selfish gratification. He knows nothing of the sweet emotions of charity and benevolence, and must be ever a stranger to the noble sensations they excite.—It is well if the suggestions of his boundless avarice do not prompt him beyond the bounds of integrity. The honesty of a covetous person can be but doubtful at the best.

A revengeful disposition is as dreadful to society as burdensome to itself: it is the whirlwind of the soul, which under its dominion resembles a fury of the infernal regions. What sad catastrophes have been effected by revenge! what inexpressible torment overwhelms the heart, where that dreadful venom operates!

It is easy to perceive, by the slightest glance, that every one of the passions here enumerated are totally destructive of peace: there can be no such thing as tranquillity in the breast which they inhabit. Let it, then, be the care of my dearest girls, to guard against the fatal ascendancy of either of them. There cannot be a more lamentable object than a human being who

submits to become the sport of passions : a barque in a storm, driven by winds, and shattered by the tempest, exhibits but a faint picture of such a wretch, whose days pass in continual anguish ; he looks for peace, but finds despair ; casts oblique reflections on the wisdom and goodness of Providence ; distrusts his attributes ; curses his own being, and dies if possible more wretched than he lived.

The infinitely wise and good Creator saw the abundant evils that would accrue to mankind from the degeneracy of the passions, and therefore in his goodness determined at an appointed time to promulgate a religion, the aim of which should be to regulate passions, and direct them to their proper channel : such is the Christian revelation ; in its ends and nature an antidote to moral evil.

Perhaps the natural passions of the human mind may be reduced to two—the love of pleasure and the love of praise ; and from the corruptions of these may be traced every irregular affection of the heart—when men no longer knew the true source from whence to look for happiness, or approbation, it is not much wonder it should be sought in power, riches and pre-eminence ; nor that the love of these should branch into self-love, vain glory, and all the other evil passions, which cause so much misery in the world.

The regulation of the heart and its desires, is a point then of the utmost importance, since on it depends your present peace and eternal glory, “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it

are the issues of life." And when you have repelled the approach of any passion, guard still more effectually against its entrance, by endeavouring to establish in your mind the contrary virtue;—as for instance, subdue pride and cherish humility; guard against the desire of power and riches, by attaining that poverty of spirit which is content with little, and desires no applause but that of Heaven.

Never lose sight of this truth—that there is no happiness adequate to the capacities of the human soul, but what is found in the exercise of piety and virtue; nor any praise worthy her regard, but what results immediately therefrom.

Adieu,

CORNELIA.

LETTER IV.

THE most glorious conquest you can possibly obtain is that of yourselves. Solomon was of opinion, that he who could govern his own spirit, had attained a much higher point of dominion, than if he should rule a kingdom. It is certainly much easier to give wise and upright laws to others, than to obey them ourselves; and when you can control your own inclination, you will have learned the whole essence of moral philosophy.

But a negative virtue is not all that is to be at-

tained, although thousands content with it, maintain through life the character of good sort of people.—The epithet, however, contains no very high eulogium, those good kind of folks seldom getting above a mediocrity in goodness. It certainly is not sufficient to abstain from evil, a Christian must be distinguished by active virtue.

The Christian religion is a beautiful comment on the moral law. The priest who passed by the wounded Jew, was, for aught we are told to the contrary, a very good sort of a man, and had some sentiments of compassion, for he went and *looked* on the poor creature, and no doubt kindly *wished* it had been in his power to relieve him; but the good, the benevolent Samaritan, was the generous, *active* friend, whose character will never be read without being admired. The lawyer also possessed a tolerable share of negative merit, having always kept the commandments; yet, says our Saviour, thou lackest one thing—that heroic benevolence, which disregards all attention to selfish gratification, in the noble ardour with which it contributes to the necessities of mankind.

These instances are fine illustrations of the Mosaic dispensation, and eminently tend to exalt human nature to the highest possible perfection. It is not enough, say the gospel tenets, that ye refrain from actual violence to any one—you shall love your enemies, and do good to those that hate you. Severe injunction!—yet you see by it to how refined a pitch the virtue of a christian must aspire.

Do not then rest satisfied with being as just

or kind as the letter of the law exacts—be actively good, and seek occasions of exercising your kindness and charity—to administer as far as we are able to the wants of our fellow creatures—to reclaim the vicious—to vindicate the character of the injured—after the claims of the friendless and oppressed—reconcile differences, and be indefatigable in the promotion of peace and happiness to all within the compass of our ability, are employments worthy of a rational being.

There are many cases that occur in life, wherein those who will obey only the rules of legal justice, must fall short of those notions of honesty, which natural reason and conscience suggest; as a good mind wants not the bonds of human laws, so on some occasions it rises to a generosity that is superior to their narrow limits. Obey the innate ideas of rectitude which God himself has stamped on the human soul—and think it not sufficient to be just, except you are generous also.

Let your conduct be regulated by the nicest rules of propriety and prudence; and let your bosoms glow with the enthusiasm of virtue, that you may ever shine forth the steady zealous friend, the benevolent active neighbour, and the truly useful member of society; considering yourselves as citizens of the world, whose only business in it is to do good.

Adieu,

CORNELIA.

LETTER V.

BUT so exalted and refined a turn of sentiment is never the production of ignorance. It is only in cultivated minds we must look for it; for the prime fruits of virtue grow not in the soil that has never been broken up by moral instruction. A virtuous and intelligent friend is perhaps the most valuable acquisition a young person can make; but as one of this description may never fall to your lot, supply the want thereof, as well as you can, by books.

By all means cultivate a taste for reading, but take care that your taste be a just one—that is, be more desirous of instruction than amusement or you will profit but little by literary pursuits. Those who read merely to please the imagination, may be sure of not reading to advantage, and do seldom acquire a relish for works of solid merit and utility. I have never known a young person who was fond of novels capable of relishing any thing superior to them. For my own part, I had rather see a girl wholly ignorant of the alphabet, than attached to that species of writing; for I am convinced that infinitely more have erred in the conduct of life from that cause, than from any other. The sentiments and ideas they impress, are fatal illusions to mislead the poor reader, who, after wasting days and years in the study, is still an utter stranger to the world she lives in—and, what is worse, inspired with the most erroneous notions of it, which commonly lead to some false step, or ill-judged connexion, that se-

cures her a wretch for life. It cannot be otherwise—for the scenes, characters, and incidents, these books describe, are to be found no where but in the author's romantic fancy. They have nothing to do with the real knowledge of the world; and consequently, those who think to steer through it by such guides, must, in the end find themselves mistaken. Just as well may a traveller think to make the tour of Europe by a chart of Asia.

If curiosity must be amused, and the imagination pleased, why may not the understanding be improved at the same time? This is very practicable, for there are many works of genius extremely well calculated to answer each of these ends; but they are not the histories of Sir such a one, Miss what d'ye call um, or any of those futile productions, which the press daily emits, to vitiate the taste, and corrupt the principles of the age.

There is a certain mental vigour necessary to virtue as well as to happiness, but modern novels, under the specious mask of refined sentiments, introduce a dangerous softness that has often destroyed both. True refinement is the glory of a rational creature, but whatever enervates the mind, must debase it. Lycurgus thought so, I suppose, when he banished the poets from his common-wealth; yet surely he lived near enough to Athens to have learned to draw a proper line between ferocity and effeminacy.

The passion for novelty, so inherent in youth, may be abundantly gratified, by the study of history. Here you meet with new and uncommon

events—become acquainted with a variety of characters, and are enabled to form a just estimate of mankind; for except allowing for a few local customs or prejudices, human nature was the same two thousand years ago as at this time. There is something extremely agreeable to the mind in weighing and examining the actions of celebrated personages, who, in their day, made the mighty tremble—in marking the rise or fall of empires, and to be able to determine the secret causes of those revolutions which once astonished the world.

The ages appear as inconsiderable points, to those who are acquainted with history—they see the various nations of the earth pass in review before them, and trace a more than human power busy in the affairs of men—by taking in at one comprehensive view so vast a tract of time, they discern the nice connexions of that scheme of Providence, which often appears broken and irregular, when contemplated only through the medium of a few years.

It is almost impossible to be well versed in the characters of the politer nations of antiquity without catching something of that magnanimity which distinguished them; and I know not why an acquaintance with their manners should not be thought as necessary in the system of female education, as it usually is in that of the other sex. If the Greek and Roman veterans displayed qualities which the heroes of the present day would be proud to imitate, their wives and daughters were often patterns of such virtues, as would be

allowed to dignify a lady of the eighteenth century.

Read modern history, as well as ancient—the knowledge of the nations who inhabit the globe as well as yourselves is amusing and interesting—the heart, too, may be the better for it—narrow prejudices are removed, and the better mankind become acquainted with each other, the more the divine principle of philanthropy must be extended. National enmity has no other parent but ignorance—the enlightened, the philosophic mind, even through the veil of different tongues and customs, can discern a kindred being—a member of that universal family, whose head is the Deity.

Next to travelling itself, nothing tends more to enlarge the ideas than journals of travels and voyages, if the writers have been faithful and accurate; and you will read them with infinite pleasure, if you have been careful to acquire a knowledge of geography. This renders you familiar with the countries you read of—You recollect their soil, climate, and productions—know their respective boundaries, and can readily mark out their place on the globe.

Having thus, my dear girls, pointed out to you so exhaustless a source of amusement, I will only for the present, add, that I am, &c.

CORNELIA,

LETTER VI.

AS long as curiosity continues a leading feature in the human character, Biography will form a favourite species of reading. Every body is eager to pry into the private character of a celebrated personage, and are better pleased to know, how such an one acts in domestic life, than in the senate, or the field. And, indeed, it is there that the best estimate of the real description can be formed.

The private lives of famous persons afford much edification to the reader; the vice or meanness too often there displayed, teaches us not to be dazzled by the blaze of popularity or power; and to contemn that virtue which is built on the desire of some alone. If on the other hand, by following these darlings of fame to the closet, or the fire-side, we discover the same nobleness of heart that distinguishes them with the multitude, justly they become patterns for our example; the mind rejoices to find something about them that is *imitable*, for though few are called forth as distinguished actors on the theatre of the world, all may, if they please, be *great* in private life: That is, may acquire those amiable qualities of mind, which can only constitute real greatness; without which the hero is no more than a hypocrite, and even the robe of royalty, but a tinsel ornament to cover real meanness.

Your chief aim should be the knowledge of the human heart, and that is in general more fully discovered in trifling traits and circumstances,

than by important actions performed under the public eye. But you nowhere find human nature so impartially delineated, as in the sacred writings. There the historians, neither influenced by passion or prejudice, relate both actions and their secret springs with unerring candour; never calumniating enemies, or stooping to flatter the favourites of their nation.

The Jewish writers had the fairest opportunities imaginable for exaggerating the virtues of their heroes, considering the miraculous powers so often exerted in their behalf. Such an adventure as that of David with Goliath, would have been thought by a pagan writer sufficient grounds for exalting his favourite to a God: yet the inspired Biographer has drawn that Prince with all his frailties about him; all the inequality of humanity; sometimes glowing with the rapturous devotion of a Seraphim;—at others, enslaved by the meanest passions. Such instances of candour, considered with the national pride of the Jews, leave no room to doubt the veracity of the sacred penman on any occasion.

The scriptures also finely illustrate many parts of profane history: we are told of embattled armies, and cities levelled with the dust; but it is only in holy writ we find those armies prophetically marshalled, and that destruction denounced perhaps an hundred years before the event. These are instances which impress the mind with reverence for the sacred records, and fill it with august ideas of the eternal Providence.

The works of our best moralists will not be entertaining to you, if your taste for reading

be as good as I wish it. Amongst the productions of this kind are the Spectator and the Rambler; **as** conspicuous for the elegance of their language, **as** the soundness of their morality. But there **are** no better rules for the moral conduct of life, **than** are found in the writings of Solomon, and the Son of Sirach; which, though composed so **many** ages ago, may yet be read to much advantage, by those who would pass through life happily and respected.

If you are fond of poetry, be careful to read only what is good of it. There is a kind of versification that tends to debase the mind;—wherever immorality or indelicacy is found, such must ever be the effect. Elegance of numbers, though a requisite, is yet the lowest recommendation of good poetry;—its characteristics are dignity of thought, purity of expression, and, above all, the best principles of piety and morality. For this reason, those poetical pieces extant in the Bible are by good judges allowed to be truly sublime. Poetry in its original state, being only the harmonious effusions of a mind glowing with elevated sentiments of generosity, gratitude and devotion. Many of the Psalms are noble compositions, and neither for beauty of figure or energy of expression, have ever been excelled.

Natural history affords a delightful study—it is not however expected that you should have a systematic idea of every vegetable, animal or insect; but it is unpardonable, for one who is blest with leisure and opportunity, not to have at least a general knowledge of the most conspicuous of

Nature's works;—to be ignorant of the beauty and properties of those, is to wander over the fair creation, as Thomson expresses it, “with brute unconscious gaze.” The curious and intelligent spectator finds the variegated face of nature, a source of rational amusement, and reads in glowing characters the wisdom of the Deity. It is not in such pursuits that the human mind acquires those illiberal sentiments which so often disgrace it;—all it here finds is noble and beneficent, worthy that Divine Author, whom to know and adore, is the proper glory of an intelligent being.

Akenside has so elegantly expressed the pleasures attending a taste for the study and beauties of nature, that I will relieve you from the tediousness of this epistle, by transcribing a few of his admired lines.

O! blest of Heaven, whom not the languid songs
 Of luxury, the syren! not the bribes
 Of sordid wealth, nor all the gaudy spoils
 Of pageant honour, can seduce to leave
 Those ever blooming sweets, which from the store
 Of Nature, fair Imagination culls
 To charm th' enliven'd soul! What, tho' not all
 Of mortal offspring can attain the height
 Of envied life; tho' only few possess
 Patrician treasures, or imperial state;
 Yet Nature's care, to all her children just,
 Endows at large whatever happy man
 Will deign to use them.

————— For him the Spring
 Distils her dews, and from the silken gem
 Its lucid leaves unfolds; for him the hand
 Of Autumn tinges every fertile branch

With blooming gold, and blushes like the morn.
 Each passing hour sheds tribute from her wings;
 And still new beauties meet his lonely walk,
 And loves unfelt attract him.—Not a breeze
 Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbibes
 The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain
 From all the tenants of the warbling shade
 Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
 Fresh pleasure unprov'd:—nor then partakes
 Fresh pleasure only; for the attentive mind,
 By this harmonious action on her pow'rs,
 Becomes herself harmonious; wont so oft
 In outward things to meditate the charm
 Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home
 To find a kindred order, to exert
 Within herself this elegance of love,
 This fair inspir'd delight; her temper'd pow'rs
 Refine at length, and ev'ry passion wears
 A chaster, milder, more attractive mein.

Thus the men
 Whom nature's works can charm, with God himself
 Hold converse; grow familiar day by day
 With his conceptions; act on his plan;
 And form to his the relish of their souls.

Believe, dear girls, I am ever the most affectionate of your friends.

CORNELIA.

LETTER VII.

AMONGST the accomplishments necessary to the female character, I think needle-work may claim the first place, it having so close a connexion with neatness, which is indisputably requisite to render you comfortable to yourselves, or ami-

able in the esteem of others. The ladies of the last century certainly held needle-work in much greater estimation than those of the present; witness the many laborious performances that remain as proofs of their amazing industry in this respect—but the world is ever prone to extremes, and because this art was then pursued to the exclusion of every intellectual accomplishment, there are many in our days who seem to think it beneath their study or ambition.

The Mahometan sentiment which prevailed some years ago, of the inferiority of the female mind; seems exploded in this age of universal refinement; and a woman of cultivated understanding is no longer a phenomenon. The paths of knowledge are rendered accessible—men of learning have stooped from the elevations of science to accelerate the improvements of the other sex—they abridge, compile, explain for their assistance and advancement in polite literature.

Make all the use you possibly can of such advantages, and be convinced that the cultivation of the mind will exalt you in the estimation of rational beings—will open to your exhaustless sources of amusement and delight, of which the ignorant can have no conception—yet be careful, my dear girls, never to overlook one feminine grace or accomplishment. There is a line of character drawn between the sexes, which neither can pass without becoming contemptible. It is not to make you despise those acquirements which have ever been appropriated to the female sex, that you are incited to mental attainments, but to render you still more valuable as women;

and the better your minds are cultivated, the more you will see the propriety of attending to those minutæ which become the condition in which Providence has placed you.

I do not see how you can acquit yourself tolerably in domestic life, without a knowledge of needle work; but granting your rank and fortune may place you above the absolute necessity of learning that part of it which is called plain work—yet consider how far the ornamental kinds may be of use to amuse the intervals of pleasures, or other pursuits, as well as to promote the display of an elegant taste. Even our innocent amusements require variation, and the mind may be agreeably relieved, by imitating with the needle the beautiful productions of nature—but there is something which places a skill in needle work in a much more important point of view, and that is, the inconstancy of fortune, which in her capricious moods has been often known to compel those, whom once she smiled on, to procure their subsistence by those very arts which were acquired only for amusement.—Whatever may be a resource against that mutability which marks all human affairs, becomes an object of importance.

A proficiency in the arts of domestic management and œconomy, ought justly to be ranked among the accomplishments of a young lady. You must be unacquainted with nothing that appertains to good housewifery. Some girls have I known profess so violent an attachment to literary pursuits, that they are content to remain ignorant of common attainments.

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This shews a pitiable weakness—elevated minds are attentive to every thing; and, believe me, it is very possible to possess a competent knowledge of polite literature, and be well versed in the methods of well governing a house at the same time—the latter qualifications have of themselves constituted many an useful character in female life, which is more than can be said of the former. Blend, therefore, my beloved girls, *polite* with *useful* acquirements, and you will be what I wish you.

In writing, acquire if possible, a good hand, yet that is not so essentially necessary as the being able to write grammatically—the violation of the *common* rules of grammar, is an indisputable mark of low breeding; and although my Lord Chesterfield sarcastically said that bad spelling was only allowable in a woman, it certainly is not allowable in any one, who pretends to an education above the vulgar. Could you write as fine a hand as even A——n himself, bad spelling would disgrace the whole. The substituting *have* for *has*, *are* for *is*, &c. infallibly sinks you in the estimation of well bred persons. In order to avoid errors of this kind, habit is to be particularly guarded against. If in your early years you are not careful to write and spell correctly, it is a thousand to one if you ever do. You see, therefore, of what consequence it is that you pay a present attention to these points.

I reckon among the useful attainments, the ability of penning an epistle with propriety and elegance—many fortunate circumstances

in life may be facilitated thereby—a well wrote letter has often effected what verbal requests have sought in vain—besides this consideration, how greatly must the sweet intercourse of friendship be improved by a free and intelligent correspondence! Two friends, though placed at the extremities of the globe, may thus enjoy all the pleasures of such a connexion; but except you attain the desirable habit of expressing your sentiments without embarrassment, hope not to enjoy any thing of so delicate a satisfaction. Letters should be the pictures of the soul; and so they always would be if people acquired only the knack of expressing their thoughts just as they arise. Write as you would speak, were the persons you address immediately before you. There is no more than this necessary to establish that easiness of style which is the chief beauty of epistolary correspondence. That good breeding which I hope will be habitual to you, will dictate those terms and forms of address, the condition of those you write to requires.—We do not always find the most learned people write the most agreeable letters—perhaps for no other reason than that they take too much trouble about it, and, like the good Archbishop of Benevento, reject the first thought that occurs. Some that I have known indite an epistle in such a stiff and formal style, and load it so disgustfully with tautology, that one would almost take it for an Act of Parliament. When you write a letter, my dear girls, forget the idea of pen, ink and paper—suppose only you are

speaking to the person, and you will write an *agreeable*, if not a *fine* letter—to effect the latter, something must have been done by dame Nature—however, this I know—that the most elevated sentiments would not look graceful in such compositions, except accompanied by perfect ease and expression, and have the appearance of flowing spontaneously from the heart. Many excellent models of epistolary writing have been recommended to young proficients. You cannot have better than those ascribed to Pope Ganganelli;—whoever was the author, he has certainly hit on that ease, sprightliness, and elegance, which it is my earnest wish may characterize whatever falls from your pen. Would to Heaven that all the world possessed the same candor and liberality of sentiment which breathes through every one of those elegant epistles.

Adieu.

CORNELIA.

LETTER VIII.

WHEN you compare the awkward motions of a rustic, with the genteel and graceful movement of a person of education, you cannot but be assured of the utility of dancing; but it should never be forgotten, that to give this superiority of mien and air is the chief end of that polite accomplishment;—to lose sight of this idea, is

to take away the real worth of that branch of genteel education;—to reduce it to an unimportant, if not pernicious attainment. However a knowledge of dancing may sometimes conduce to social pleasure, and in that light be esteemed an agreeable and innocent recreation, I cannot help thinking, that the same application that is requisite to form an opera dancer, may very well be dispensed with in a young lady of a different character. The extravagant leaps and gestures of some fashionable females, make me think of the speech of Philip of Macedon to his son, on another occasion—I am ready to ask if they “are not ashamed to *dance* so well.”

There is scarce a human soul, however apparently dead to sensibility, but is in some measure alive to the extatic charms of music. The story of Orpheus is more than a fable—minds almost as inert and inanimate as trees themselves, have been moved by the power of harmonious sounds:—why else does the gaping rustic follow with such manifest delight the itinerant musician; and why, but that the effect of music on the passions is so incontestibly proved, has the army adopted the sons of Apollo with those of Mars? Since then this science has so great an influence on the feelings of the soul, is it not surprising that the polite world should not be more ambitious of enjoying those sublime sensations, which the best pieces are so abundantly capable of exciting, and not rest poorly satisfied with the luke-warm pleasures of sing-song, while the noble compositions of great masters, lie by totally disregarded. Indulge

the more esteem of men. The ladies of the
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 some years ago, of the inferiority of the female
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But, as the use you possibly can of such ad-
 vantages may be confined that the cultivation
 of the mind will gain you in the estimation of
 men, you will open to your exhaustless
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 vulgar can have no conception—yet be care-
 ful not to ever to overlook one femi-
 nine grace or accomplishment. There is a line
 of distinction drawn between the sexes, which
 you must pass without becoming contemptible.
 Do not think you despise those acquirements
 which have ever been appropriated to the female
 sex, for you are invited to mental attainments,
 and as far as you still more valuable as women;

and the better you will be able to
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my dear girls, a turn for music, if nature has given you such; but do not permit a song tune, or an opera air to be the limits of your excellence in that enchanting science.

Drawing, painting, &c. justly form a part of polite education, because they furnish an agreeable, as well as rational amusement. They lead to a familiarity with the beauties of nature, and that can scarcely fail to advance the mind a degree higher, even to the contemplation of her Divine Author. But if it had not this happy tendency, drawing is still a laudable amusement, because an innocent one; and whatever furnishes a recreation of that character, may certainly be deemed an auxiliary to virtue.

An acquaintance with the languages of polite nations, greatly enlarges the mind. It is the property of ignorance to esteem nothing valuable that a foreign country produces; and scarcely to allow that its inhabitants are human. Nothing tends more immediately to remove such illiberal prejudices, than studying the language of the people thus despised. The supercilious contemner is surprised to find them rational, and expressing similar ideas with those of his own country.

If necessity or inclination ever leads you from your native land, a previous acquaintance with the language of those you reside among, would much facilitate your pleasure and convenience; would open to you the avenues of social love and friendship, and take off much from those comfortless sensations the mind is apt to feel in the idea of being amongst a people it knows not.

For this end, perhaps it may be sufficient to acquire a knowledge of the French tongue, that being generally understood by intelligent persons of every European nation. But there is another advantage attending this branch of polite accomplishment, and which probably to you, my dear girls, will be the most useful—I mean the being able to read in their original, those beautiful compositions which lose many of their excellences by translation; for this reason become acquainted also with the Italian: but Homer and Virgil you tell me have beauties that can never be translated—true, yet these, I fancy you must be content to taste as pure as the labours of the learned afford them; the Greek and Latin tongues, forming no part in the polite system of female education at present, nor certainly ever can in the *useful*.

Arithmetic is a dry study, yet certainly a very useful one, to those who would manage their affairs with œconomy and prudence; a thorough knowledge of the four first rules, is sufficient to enable you to do it.

From a total ignorance of letters in female life, we are advanced to an age which requires every girl to be made a grammarian; yet it unfortunately happens, that of the numbers who profess to have studied the grammar of their native tongue, few speak or write it with that accuracy which could be wished; indeed the progress that women usually make in that science, is seldom of itself sufficient to give an habitual elegance of expression; they are more indebted for it to frequent reading of the best

authors, and the conversation of those who have themselves acquired it perfect;—what you can, acquire of grammar by such assistances of these. There is an indispensable necessity for you to write and speak English correctly; acquire that qualification as easily as you can, but nothing will more facilitate it than the methods I have mentioned.

Geography is a study that will please you an hundred times better—this is not like the former, a set of dry rules, but almost every advance you make therein, will abundantly repay your pains by the novelty of the information it produces. Besides, I cannot imagine how the frequent relations that occur in common discourse will be intelligible, without some acquaintance with this study. I am sure if you are no geographer, even a newspaper will be as inexplicable as an Egyptian hieroglyphic. Attain a competent knowledge of the globe on which you live, that your apprehension of infinite wisdom may be enlarged; which it will be in a much higher degree, if you take care to acquire a general idea of the structure of the universe. It is not expected you should become adepts in astronomy, but a knowledge of its leading principles you may and ought to obtain. The French, with their usual attention to the sex, have procured them a gentleman usher, if I may so speak, to the planetary orbs.—Fontenelle introduces them to an acquaintance with that brilliant assembly—it is not the first instance in which our agreeable neighbours have blended

the researches of the scholar, with the politeness of a fine gentleman.

Avail yourselves of such ingenious assistances, and be all your Cornelia wishes.

LETTER IX.

AN accomplished character has so many charms, that nothing needs be said to induce you to *wish*, at least, for its attainment. Yet painful application must render that wish effectual—a reflection however that should excite your emulation, rather than despondency—trivial acquirements may content the indolent and timid, but the arduous and difficult are the proper aim of elevated minds. Courage belongs not to the warrior alone—it is as often found in the closet as the field.

That resolution which is necessary for every valuable purpose of life, is the fruit only of active minds, and was never found with indolence and sloth;—determine therefore to conquer every tendency to an inactive temper. Whenever you feel in yourselves an inaptitude for doing what necessarily ought to be done, rouse that moment, or you will give ground to an enemy the most destructive to happiness and virtue; and who once entrenched is hard to be dislodged. Never defer to the next hour, that which should be the business of the present. “Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might,” said a very wise man many hundred years ago; indeed there is no precept throughout the sa-

cred writings, inculcated with greater energy than this of diligence. It is the soul of virtue—the foundation of honour and affluence.

Many a bright and shining talent lies hid in a napkin, for want of activity to unfold it ; nor do we unfrequently meet with persons struggling with distresses, which require only their own exertions to remove. Indolence takes hold of the disposition much oftener than is acknowledged ; it is possible to be wholly under its dominion, and yet suspect nothing of it ; and, what is yet more strange, to believe one's self to be the most diligent person in the world at the very time. You have seen numbers of bustling people, who are always in a hurry, and so perplexed do they appear with business, as never to be able to enjoy a friend or themselves. It would seem hard at first sight, to accuse them of indolence, and yet they are of all people most commonly under its power ; for an habitual diligence would so comfortably arrange the affairs of life, that none would be found to intrude on another. Consider the surprising despatch with which some in public stations, manage a multiplicity of the most important concerns ;—to contemplate them, one would almost conclude, nothing too extensive for the compass of the human mind ;—diligence is the charm which effects it all.

In that dismal catalogue of diseases which imbitter morality, not a few owe their existence to indolence. The indigent labourer who toils for daily bread, knows nothing of that sad train of nervous disorders which render life itself burdensome to the wealthy. In some cases, poverty

might justly be called a blessing. Great are the achievements which resolution and diligence can effect:—in nothing is their power more conspicuously seen, than in the cultivation of the mind; to reflect on the progress of the human understanding—to compare the refinements of philosophy with a state of savage nature—a Newton, with an inhabitant of New Holland, we should almost conclude some supernatural power must have contributed to give the former so infinite a superiority in the scale of beings. Without the quality I have recommended it could never have been attained, for though much be owing to accidental advantages, such as the being born in an enlightened kingdom afford, yet no inconsiderable portion of diligence is required to render these advantages personally effectual. It is this, my dear girls, that makes them yours, and without it, the soul will remain as uninformed as if destined to a land where science never darts a cheering beam.

It may seem strange to tell you of old age, before you have scarce passed your infancy: yet I must not conceal from you, that a period will arrive, when exterior attractions will be no more;—when mental acquirements will prove your highest lustre and sublimest comfort. However despicable an ignorant woman appears at any part of her life, in the decline of it she is sure to become far more contemptible; at that time it is the improvements she has made in early days, that give dignity of character. An old age of cards necessarily succeeds a youth of folly. Pope could not have said any thing more de-

structive of the insignificancy of those ancient habits, than he has expressed in that concise satire. If you would avoid the contempt which never fails to attend a frivolous old age, you must pass a youth of diligence and application.

But then the pleasures resulting from it surpass description ; the satisfactions of a rich cultivated mind are only fully known to the happy possessor ; one of them, we are assured, is a noble independence, which creates, if I may so speak, its own happiness ; is not indebted to dissipation, or the caprice of others ; but can derive from itself exhaustless resources for solitude or society. Ordinary persons are obliged to fly from ennui to the regions of amusement ; but superior beings, who have traversed the fields of useful and polite knowledge, can from themselves select materials for the most exquisite enjoyment.

Do you think this an acquisition worth desiring—then never forget that it can be obtained only by diligence and active industry. Habits of indolence are destructive of every valuable attainment, and they are as much so of happiness, as they are known to be of virtue.

Adieu.

CORNELIA.

LETTER X.

CULTIVATED minds have pleasures which surpass the vulgar apprehension. They have their pains as well—for there is an evil peculiar to refined feeling, which the untaught rustic is happily ignorant of. This happens when refinement, or at least the affectation of it, is carried to such an extreme, that it degenerates into false delicacy. The symptoms of the malady are a kind of secret dissatisfaction with every thing—the common blessings of life are despised, as inadequate to the refinement of their ideas, and every petty slight augmented by such a quickness of perception, as leads them to see affronts, when none perhaps have been intended. And this peevish irritable temper they are pleased to dignify with the name of sensibility, and pique themselves on a disposition that disqualifies them for social virtue or social happiness. What pity that a quality meant to heighten every real blessing, should be ascribed to the mere chimera of a sickly brain! Never may you, my dears, by indulging these fictitious feelings, refine away the felicity which a kind Providence scatters in your path of life. Nourish in your bosoms humility and good-nature—these will teach you to make the best of your lot, whatever it be, and give a relish to every enjoyment—all is serene where they reside. Humility, by arrogating nothing to herself, remains unhurt at the supercilious scorn of ignorance or pride; and good-nature, by casting a veil over the foibles of others, presents to our view the best side of this motley scene.

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Without doubt, superior minds have a quicker sense of what is beautiful in nature, or desirable in life, than a peasant, whose ideas extend not beyond his daily occupations—perhaps they feel also more acutely the evils of their condition; yet the persons who suffer most by this affected sensibility are not they who have the greatest share of afflictive events, but the idly speculative, who being employed to no good purpose, have time to nourish those artificial feelings which Nature knows nothing of.

Sensibility!—What is it?—Is it not that delicate perception of natural and moral beauty, which the Creator has implanted in the soul to exalt its happiness, and awaken its noblest passions? How greatly, then, do they err who substitute in the room of this best gift of Heaven, that which is the very weakness of humanity, pride and peevishness?

It is paying a very poor compliment to literary pursuits, to suppose they are productive of that softness which unfit the mind for enduring the common accidents of life. And those attainments are of little value that serve no better purpose than to barb the arrows of misfortune with stings which the enlightened never feel. But probably they who dream of such effects are the superficial, who never dived beyond the surface of literature, and whose feeble intellects are unable to digest even the little they have imbibed.

If you have really made any advancement in mental improvement, it will invigorate the powers of the soul, and inspire her with that mag-

nanimity which is certainly necessary to the happiness of a being who is every moment exposed to sorrow and disappointment. Value not yourselves on any refinements that are short of this effect.

Some I know, are even restrained from the exercise of benevolence by this affectation of sensibility; their feelings are too tender to bear with scenes of distress, and too refined for the duties of social life; they therefore keep at an unfriendly distance from society, lest the ignorance or rudeness they there may meet with, should wound their excessive delicacy; but how is this obeying the injunction of the Apostle, who exhorts us to be kindly affectioned one to another, bearing with each other's infirmities?

In fine, my dear girls, come to the feast of social life, accompanied by the virtues of humility and charity, and you will not arise dissatisfied from the entertainment.

Yours,

CORNELIA.

LETTER XI.

I HAVE often thought that the great prevalence of vice arises chiefly from a culpable weakness of temper—for there is nothing so amiable in it that it should be followed for its own sake. It is the mere want of resolution that be-

trays such numbers into the dreadful abyss of sin and misery.

“ The world’s dread laugh
 “ Scarce e’en the firm Philosopher can bear.”

But, in my opinion, he must be a poor Philosopher who cannot, and would have made but a sorry figure in the Portico or Lyceum.

It is not meant to inculcate to you a boisterous, imperious carriage. May my girls possess every feminine grace and virtue; but these cannot be supported without some portion of resolution. There is a proper firmness, without which neither virtue, happiness, or dignity of character, can be long maintained. Distrust those who extol the soft irresolution of the sex—it is the very rock on which thousands of deluded females have been lost.

Be possessed of the true principles of honour and rectitude, and dare to adhere to them *in spite of solicitation, or that still more powerful means of temptation, ridicule.* Establish your opinions on truth and reason, and maintain them, when necessary, with firmness;—some people give up both their faith and their friends, for want of resolution to defend them.

Too weak to think, too indolent to choose.

In business, and the affairs of life, a proper firmness is indispensably necessary. Those who can be influenced by every adviser, or intimidated at every appearance of difficulty, must of course

be desultory and unsettled. They effect nothing of consequence, because they know not how to persevere in any undertaking. Obstacles will attend the best concerted schemes, and mankind will ever think differently about them; but the truly wise will await with steady patience the issue of those measures they have been careful to found in prudence and the moral fitness of things. Some will undertake nothing till they see the path smooth before them, and attain almost a certainty of success. Such will find their lives wasted, before they have determined on the plan of it. Those who best know the state of humanity, will be convinced, that to design prudently and act firmly, is all that can be done by mortals.

Without resolution, it will sometimes be impossible to act agreeably to the dictates of right reason and virtue; for these are not always the *ton*; and when that is the case, no inconsiderable share of fortitude is requisite to repel the attacks of ridicule or amusement—nor can the treasures of knowledge be explored, without a portion of it—for “there is nothing truly valuable to be attained without pains and labour.” Dismayed at the prospect, the indolent, as described by Solomon, cry, “a lion is in the street;” —rather may my dear girls be animated with a noble ardour, to surmount every difficulty which would retard their acquisition of merit and felicity. Parnassus itself was a craggy rock, but then the Muses dwelt on its top.

But if resolution be necessary to the attaining whatever is valuable or desirable in life, it is no less so to the supporting us under a depriva-

tion of it. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong—hence it follows, that the wisest measures do not always meet with success, nor can virtue itself prevent the encroachments of affliction—in such circumstances fortitude gives a dignity to suffering, and tends also to alleviate the weight of it. Every one knows the sentiment of the Philosopher—“that a good man struggling with adversity, is a sight on which the Gods themselves might look down with delight.” However that be, it is certain that such a character never fails to command the respect and veneration of mankind. Magnanimity, of all the qualities of the mind, seems most secure of admiration. The Saviour of the world inculcated it, when having forewarned his disciples of their approaching sufferings, he enjoined them to possess their souls in patience. Patience is amongst the Christian duties, what magnanimity is in the list of heroic virtues. They are synonymous terms—both imply that calm, unshaken fortitude, which is at once characteristic of the hero and the Christian.

But do not conclude this firmness of mind—this laudable resolution is calculated only to be admired. It is of the highest actual service to the unfortunate, not only by enabling them to sustain the burden of their sufferings, but by opening a way to better prospects. The timid and irresolute sink, at the approach of adversity, into a despondency the most unfriendly to their affairs, by precluding that courageous industry which might render them more tolerable; and

therefore, by the nature of things, augment the very evils of which they complain.

Cultivate in all circumstances this innate constancy—it will aid you in the attainment of every good and valuable end. In prosperity, will secure you from the corruptions of vanity—impart dignity and security to adversity. In fine, you cannot, I think, but be steady in the practice of virtue, if you are firm in the expectation of its rewards.

Rest assured that I am ever your friend,

CORNELIA.

LETTER XII.

MY epistles to you, my dear girls, are written without the least attention to method; their respective subjects have more the appearance of chance, than design; and therefore, may be justly called cursory thoughts on various subjects. Young folks, I know, do not love precise rules, and perhaps you deem the irregularity of my letters their chief merit. Allow them, however, one more—that of sincerity, and believe that the sentiments they contain, flow from the heart; I believe, I need not add the word *spontaneously*.

As I disclaim all methodical arrangement of my subjects, I will here give you my thoughts on that very important part of female study, dress. Be not afraid that I am about to confine

you to a primitive plainness, though probably, such a mode may be found more advantageous to beauty and elegance, than modern finery, yet I shall recommend that which is at once agreeable to fashion, and your own rank and circumstances. To reconcile these three conditions, is no easy task, yet herein lies a chief perfection of the female character; few women possess the happy art:—yet those who do, must be allowed a very superior degree of merit. It is no inconsiderable trait in the character of an amiable young lady, that she knows how to support a genteel appearance; and yet pay a just regard to the frugality, which probably her limited circumstances require.

A fantastical and expensive turn in dress, is the certain mark of a little mind; but that attention to it, which principally regards neatness, is undoubtedly extremely laudable. Resolve to be always neat, or you can never be well-dressed;—a dirty ruffle, a torn apron, &c. are sufficient to disgrace the most splendid apparel. Neatness is always within your power, and will always render you respectable in whatever rank of life you are placed; but finery without it, is nothing more than a ridiculous glare, which is never seen but with disgust.

Fashion has imposed some general rules, which may innocently be followed under the restrictions I have mentioned. Your clothes may be made according to the mode, though the materials which compose them, be less costly than if they belonged to a Dutchess. An uncouth ill-fashioned habit, derogates even from the im-

portance of a philosopher; and it is not till after a near acquaintance, that merit is discovered through a shabby garment—so much are mankind governed by appearance.

“Prithee, good Xenocrates (said Plato to his pupil) sacrifice to the graces.” That great man knew how much the mental accomplishments might be illustrated and adorned by a polished exterior;—a wise person, it is true, would not make this altogether the criterion of merit, yet, perhaps, would not readily look for worth beneath an ungraceful exterior.

After all, my dear girls, esteem the frivolous, though often troublesome arts of dress, but as a tax you are in some sort obliged to pay to the folly of the age. Remember on all occasions, that external ornaments cannot make you better or happier women. Great minds, however they may have judged it necessary to conform to insignificant customs, have always regarded them in their proper light. The attention such are seen to shew to the idol fashion, is only a good-natured condescension to the weakness of mankind, in points they judge of an indifferent nature, and much too trifling to become the objects of their serious cares. The silly and ignorant are they who love dress for its own sake.

I am, &c.

CORNELIA.

LETTER XIII.

NEXT to our own principles, we are to regard those of our companions; for they are almost of as much importance to us, as by long and intimate acquaintance they generally become our own. Virtuous habits are strengthened by example—so are vicious ones, but in a much higher degree; nothing therefore can be a point of greater consequence than the choice of companions.

A great deal has been written on the subject, and every one who has the care of youth, fails not to inculcate the keeping good company;—the only misfortune is, that the term has seldom been sufficiently explained, and the young mind is left to annex to it the ideas of birth and fortune, till by degrees the expression is supposed to imply both these qualifications.

The result has been the disturbance of all order in social life;—each class of people quitting their own sphere to associate with those of superior rank; and these again, inspired by the same sentiment, repel with scorn the ambitious attempt, solicitous only to attract the notice of still greater folks than themselves. Thus in the room of that social amity with which the human heart should overflow, it is unhappily divided between the throbbings of ambition, and the pangs of offended pride.

It is evident, that in this bustle, greater attention is paid to the accidental circumstances of rank and affluence, than to real merit; we should

not else so often see people of the middling rank, when flattered by the notice of a superior, so elated with the honour of keeping, what they call good company; when perhaps, that superior is conspicuous for almost every vice and meanness. This is a grand mistake surely—as fatal to happiness as to morals.

Good company can only mean persons of noble sentiments, refined manners, and enlightened understandings. But these qualities are not to be expected, where the scantiness of fortune, has absolutely excluded the means of education; for the human mind becomes every thing by culture. It is therefore found, that in the lower ranks of society, where poverty has denied time and abilities for that happy employ; the worst habits, and most depraved morals prevail; for this reason you are not to choose companions from such a class.

In fine, your associates must be those of a liberal and virtuous education. It may happen you may find a friend of this description, whose relative or necessary connexion, may not be eligible for you. In this case she is by no means a proper companion, as her own merit, however great, will not compensate for the danger you incur in frequently mingling with persons of improper character.

A cultivated mind is the proper soil for every moral and social virtue—it is most likely to be found where Heaven has bestowed an easy fortune, consequently the genteeler ranks of life will be most likely to afford you proper companions. But here let merit alone, and not adven-

titious circumstances, influence your selection—despise that contemptible weakness which piques itself on the rank, rather than the mental value of an acquaintance; and never let a principle of vanity lead you to the servile imitation of vice or folly, however sanctioned by wealth or titles. Little minds are ever dazzled by shew and splendour—it is the property of the enlightened only to distinguish personal worth from external advantages. I should think you disgraced by an acquaintance with an Empress, if she was not as much distinguished by virtue as power.

Be careful not to form an acquaintance too hastily—many a virtuous girl has sunk for ever in the esteem of the world, by being seen in company with those of doubtful reputation. In vain she declares her ignorance of the real character of her companions. She having admitted them to her society, without the requisite investigation of that point, infallibly renders her own prudence suspected.

A very extensive acquaintance is not necessary to social happiness. A few select friends will most conduce to that end; and it is among these that

“The free full converse of the friendly heart.”

flows with uninterrupted and delight—unfeigned cheerfulness and real enjoyment exist much oftener in these little circles, than in large and ceremonious assemblies. But should your station in life render a large acquaintance unavoidable

able, you will observe to all, a free unrestrained politeness, without admitting every one indiscriminately to your confidence. Be ever frank and easy, without revealing your own secrets, or those of your friends, and make none your intimates but those of worth and honour.

Much, very much of human happiness depends on the proper choice of acquaintance—an ill chosen friend has power to mar our felicity as much as an amiable and faithful one contributes to it. The heart is formed for social intercourse; and when that intercourse is founded on the moral, religious virtues, it gives a zest to the other enjoyments of life.

I am, dear girls, &c.

CORNELIA.

LETTER XIV.

THERE are certain restrictions necessary to render the gift of speech what the great Creator designed it—a principal means of happiness to his rational creatures. The first of these is an habitual care never to violate the laws of truth. The pleasures resulting from mutual conversation vanish entirely, when no dependence can be placed in the speaker's veracity. Those who speak merely from the suggestions of imagination, or, what is worse, malignity, are justly chargeable with half the strife that disturbs the

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peace of society. Such persons are the most dangerous companions, and need only be known to be generally despised and avoided. Indeed, so high a regard veracity obtains among people of refinement, that you cannot offer a more gross affront than to accuse them of the violation of it.

Of all that has been said in admiration of Cato's character, nothing reflects so great a lustre on it as that striking, through tacit eulogium, bestowed on him in one of the Roman courts of judicature, where a cause being to be tried which required two witnesses, and one only appearing, the judge declared he could not dispense with the law, *even though Cato himself were the witness.*

Besides, as Archbishop Tillotson finely observes, a constant adherence to truth has the least trouble and difficulty in it; it sits always upon the lips; whereas a lie is troublesome, and needs a great many more to make it good.

Next to the character of a liar, that of the detractor is the most odious—a habit of traducing the reputation of others, by speaking all the ill we have heard of them, or putting the worst constructions on their actions, is totally opposite to the spirit of Christianity, which breathes nothing but candour and charity. There is also something extremely mean in the practice, as the accused persons have seldom an opportunity of refuting the charge. The cruel aspersion is borne on the wings of scandal from circle to circle, nor perhaps reaches the injured party till

the wound given to reputation is too deep for cure.

Barbarous as such a custom is, I need not say how greatly it prevails in almost all companies. I have, however, the charity to believe it does not always proceed from malice or envy. When no knowledge has been treasured up in the mind—no useful information acquired, conversation cannot receive aid from intellectual stores—what then, must become of it?—must it flag, and silence—dreadful silence reign?—No, something must rekindle it; and when no rational subject arises, that something must be scandal. This, though it may be a palliation of the crime, is yet no excuse; for the wounds given by unmeaning ignorance are as deep as those inflicted by premeditated rancour. How shameful is it that an impertinent eagerness for talking should thus wantonly explore the secret recesses of domestic life, and presume to judge of actions, the motives of which cannot be scanned by these ignorant prattlers!

The most effectual way to secure yourselves from the commission of this vice, will be the adorning your minds with such acquisitions of knowledge and useful intelligence, as will enable you to furnish subjects for conversation, without descending to frivolity or detraction. But should you not be so happy as to possess these desirable resources, I hope you will have so much candour and good-nature as to be content with being accounted a dull and lifeless companion, rather than indulge an eagerness for talking at the expence of other people's good name.

Detraction is not only a violation of the rules of religion, but is also so impolitic a crime, as no one who wishes to be well received in the world would ever commit—for a person who is addicted to scandal, is a terror to society; the respect they receive, resembles the homage the Indians are said to pay to the Devil, rather to evade his malignity, than procure his love. And however curiosity may, for awhile, listen to an ill-natured anecdote, yet, be assured, the relater is regarded with a secret disgust by every benevolent person, who naturally expects to meet the same censorious fate, when opportunity serves.

Good policy will therefore correct a censorious disposition; yet, I trust, your restraint will be derived from a superior motive, namely, the obligations of religion, which forbid to speak evil of any, or to judge uncharitably of another. The consciousness of having always obeyed these divine injunctions, will afford the best consolation, under the pain you may perhaps feel from the unjust aspersions of others—for such, probably, you will meet with in your journey of life, as no innocence can always be a defence from unmerited censure; and when this chances to be your case, you will derive unspeakable comfort, from the reflection of having treated the world more generously than it has treated you.

Whatever you say, should be meant for the entertainment or instruction of the company, rather than the gratification of vanity. Many are so much actuated by self-love, that they never speak or act, but to be applauded. Hence arises

affectedness—the most disgusting quality in nature. Deliver your sentiments as they occur, without affecting more graces in your tone or gesture than are your own—these, well managed, will be enough to render you amiable. All may be agreeable in their natural sphere, but when they innovate on that of others, the attempt is commonly frustrated.

Above all, never affect that kind of wit which aims at severe retorts and repartee—it has generally ill-nature for its basis, and seldom makes a sally but it procures an enemy, if it does not lose a friend. There is nothing in it to be admired but the readiness of thought, which gives it birth—but when the quality seems *aimed* at, rather than *possessed*, it is absolutely contemptible.

In fine—sincerity, candour, and good sense, must be the ornaments of your conversation. Politeness will give an agreeable lustre to these qualities, but remember, it can never be a substitute for them.

CORNELIA.

LETTER XV.

“HAIL politeness, power divine!” says the sonnet, and surely no unnecessary invocation; for politeness, dear girls, is the friend of social happiness and domestic peace; if it was the fashion, in this age, to have household gods, I

would surely give it a pre-eminent place amongst them.

I know not how it happens, but people seem to think, they are obliged to be polite every where, but at home—and there it is they are most required to be so; for the refined satisfactions of social intercourse, cannot long subsist without it. I am convinced, that domestic quarrels and disgusts, would much seldomer arise, if the parties were always as polite as affectionate.

But what is politeness—is it the law of fashion, or a system of rules?—No—it is the divine principle of benevolence, branched into a thousand little channels, and flowing through all the minutiae of human life. Education may improve, but can never give it; for it must be founded in the soul, or is never seen in full perfection. A painter may learn the rules of design, and the compendium of colours; but if he possesses not the enthusiasm of the art, his pictures will be lifeless and insipid.

Politeness is that amiable disposition, which delights in the happiness of others—consults their ease—prevents their wants—and yields them every possible convenience. This is the source of these civilities and attentions, which distinguish a well bred person—without it, etiquette dwindles to unmeaning ceremony.

You perceive then, that not only an attention to external graces, but a regulation of the disposition is necessary to constitute a polite person. Acquire the amiable temper I have described, and you will infallibly please with that native

case which is thought so requisite to be attained, that the world has substituted in its room its wretched resemblance, effrontery—but no more like the amiable original, than an ordinary statue to the Venus of Medicis.

I have often thought, that the best Christian is likely to be the most polite person. This is an assertion you have not been used to hear, yet may well enough be warranted by the tenour of the Gospel precepts, which inculcate the being tender of another's weakness—to prefer each other in honour—to give respect where due—with others to the like purpose. Now if these excellent lessons contain (as I think will be allowed) the substance of what, at this day, is termed good breeding, St. Paul must be a better teacher than my Lord Chesterfield himself, since he breathes the enlivening spirit, without which the ceremonial code is a lifeless system, calculated perhaps to disguise the heart, but not to add one iota to the real happiness of social life.

Without ceremony, believe me your friend,

CORNELIA.

LETTER XVI.

NOTHING is more talked of than Religion—nothing less understood—without comprehending what it really is, the spirit of bigotry would arrogate the whole, nor allow of its being without the contracted pale of a particular sect.

I have juster notions of religion—see it as it is—not a mode of ceremonies, but a divine principle influencing the whole moral conduct ; its simple, fixed and determinate sense, is briefly love of God, and good will to mankind. This, dear girls, is the sum of all religion ; without it, vain were the oblations of the Jewish church—vain are the ceremonials of the Christian.

The “love of God,” is an expression that, of late years, has been as grossly abused as the word religion. Strange as it may appear, there have been those, who leading the most immoral lives, have styled themselves lovers of the God of purity—whose tongues could utter a pious ejaculation, while their hands were committing the most flagitious crimes. But be not deceived—this exalted character belongs neither to bigotry or enthusiasm. The love of God is not a passion, but a rational principle ; it is those sentiments of reverence and gratitude, which naturally arise in a generous mind when reflecting on one supreme beneficent power, who is the immediate author of all good, and the fountain of all perfection. This conviction is the parent of unaffected piety ; the soul cannot but adore the Being she believes to be all-wise, almighty, and eternal ;—she cannot but love him who is the source of unnumbered blessings ; nor choose, but dread to offend him whose nature she believes to be Holiness. Hence the source of moral virtue—sin is avoided, because displeasing to the will of the Deity ; and virtuous dispositions are acquired ; because agreeable to a Power who is able to reward every

endeavour to please him, with eternal and unspeakable happiness.

Such a filial, rational love, must be the fruit of every mind that is not ignorant of the being and attributes of God;—or that has not received from bigotry or superstition, any mistaken notions of him. To prevent being disturbed by the spiritual pride of hypocritical fanatics, remember there is an invariable test by which you may know if you have the love of God—Ask your own heart, if it seeks the favour of the Deity above every other consideration? If it values this more than its dearest interests, and even life itself, a ready affirmative puts the question out of all doubt.

I have been always of opinion, that religion owes the abuses that have been put on her, more to the weakness than the knavery of mankind; perhaps it would be no hard task to prove, that all the absurd doctrines, which at this day disgrace her in certain sects, originated with persons, the warmth of whose imagination, exceeded the strength of their understanding; but waving whatever tends to controversy, I shall only hint, that the practice of piety has received considerable injury by devotees of the above-mentioned class. Forgetful of what was just now advanced, that religion is not a passion, but a principle, these people have made it all consist in incoherent rhapsodies, and senseless jargon of devout impulses—holy consolations, and such like, which I believe they are more indebted for to particular tempers and constitutions, than any revelation of divine favour. Persons of solid sense

have with reason been disgusted at this affected piety—but the world loves to run into extremes, and therefore it happens, that because the cant of hypocrisy or superstition has been judged injurious to the dignity of religion—modern manners disclaim any acquaintance with her at all.

But be assured, my dear girls, that nothing so highly elevates and adorns the human character, as a steady rational piety—nor is any thing capable of yielding so pure and exalted a happiness to the soul, as an habit of devotion. No one who has experienced the vicissitude of sublunary things, but must highly value the privilege of possessing a friend, that would at all times be acceptable—ready to hear the complaints of affliction, and all powerful to relieve them.

Such a friend you may enjoy in the Divine Being; of what consequence is it then that you acquire a taste for the exercises of devotion; that you cultivate a friendship with Heaven, and accustom your hearts to talk with God. This is an emphatical expression of David, and gives you an idea of rational and sincere prayer—which consists not in formal addresses, but is the genuine language of the heart. Such a divine intimacy has something in it extremely suitable to the noblest sensations of the soul; and therefore may well be sought after as a source of refined and exquisite felicity. In trouble, you will find it more precious than the balm of Gilead—it will shed a ray of sacred peace when the dark clouds of adversity obscure your path—in death. But here my pen must stop—there can be no

doubt but at that final, that awful period, the divine attachment breaks forth into a seraphic flame.

I am, more than I can say,

Your friend,

CORNELIA.

LETTER XVII.

THE generality of people style themselves Christians, without understanding the value or the necessity of christianity; and perhaps neither the one nor the other can be seen in a proper light, without taking a comparative view of the human soul before and after the fall.

It is not for my humble pen to illustrate the excellency of a system which has God himself for its author—nor is it my design to attempt a task so far above my abilities: yet that you may not wholly take your religion upon trust, I would call your attention to what man was when first created.

But a little inferior to angels—his reason was clear, his soul all purity, and his mind all intelligence—fit companion for nature's wholly spiritual, and enjoying the most familiar intercourse with them. That grand question which has since agitated the schools of philosophy, of what was the chief good of man, was all apparent to the first of the human race: he saw perfectly clear,

that it consisted in the entire assimilation of *his* will, that of the Deity—and in the pursuit found a full unmixed felicity. But he was created with the power of doing otherwise, or where would have been the merit of obedience? The duty of free agency must be far preferable to that which arises from blind necessity.

Adam continued a happy being as long as his will remained consonant to that of his Maker; but at the instant it deviated therefrom, he fell from happiness and perfection. The conciseness of the scripture history, leaves unthinking minds in doubt as to the nature of Adam's transgression, but undoubtedly it originated in the mere desire of doing contrary to the divine command;—he forgot that the Deity was his happiness, and he sought it in his own will. It was herein he sinned, and not simply by eating the forbidden fruit, for at the very moment Adam became capable of imagining there might be a good abstract from the favour of God—that moment he fell.

The Creator saw at one comprehensive view, the miseries which would accrue to mankind, from the voluntary perversion of the intellectual and moral powers;—then was the scheme of Christianity devised, as an effectual means of restoring human nature to the happiness and perfection it originally possessed. The purposed blessing was graciously announced in that prediction, that the posterity of Eve should crush the serpent's head.

The human reason thus clouded, it is almost surprising to reflect by what rapid steps the world became immersed in the worst ignorance

and vice. Those who still retained some idea of the Sovereign Creator, had recourse to a visible symbol of his majesty; for their intellectual faculties were too gross to apprehend an immaterial Deity—it soon happened that the symbol itself was made the object of divine worship; and hence, doubtless, the origin of idolatry, which in the time of Abraham had generally spread over the earth, that it appeared necessary to the Supreme Governor of the Universe to call that good man from his country and his kindred to ordain him the father of a nation; who being, by numerous and peculiar laws, separated from the rest of the world might preserve, uncorrupt, the knowledge of the Divine Nature. The Bible will convince you how ineffectual, not only these laws, but the frequent and signal manifestations of Almighty power were to secure that people from the grossest idolatry, the rights of which were now become so terrible to the imagination, that they even burnt their children alive, in sacrifices to their horrid idols. What a picture here of human nature! that nature which once so nearly approached the angelic! Do you now begin to see the necessity of a Redeemer? Let us pursue the thread of history, and take a superficial view of the most celebrated nations which peopled the earth before the glorious æra of his appearance.

The Egyptians were very early esteemed for learning, laws and arts—they were a numerous, powerful, and wealthy people, but so grossly idolatrous, that they not only worshipped im-

ges, but beasts, insects, and even vegetables. The manufactures and extensive commerce of Phœnicia, suppose some advance in refinement—but national intercourse in those wretched times served but to promulgate national idolatries. Babylon, that mighty seat of empire surpassed most other nations in the superb materials of her Gods. Astronomers there observed the motions of the Heavens, and bowed in adoration to the splendid hosts that adorned them. Cyrus, who erected the Persian on the ruins of the Babylonish Monarchy, knew nothing of the Almighty Being, who named him, an age before he had existence, as the instrument of Liberty to his captive people. Alexander, who in his turn subverted this extensive empire, could only blend his Grecian idols with the Persian—for dark, deplorably dark, was every corner of the habitable earth, except the inconsiderable land of Judea, where only a few despised, enfeebled tribes, possessed the light of sacred knowledge.

What a spectacle for the Father of the Universe! who produced a world to know him and be happy! How much must his divine compassion be excited, on contemplating his glorious work in ruins!—to redeem it was an effort worthy of himself.

We now come to the enlightened ages of Greece and Rome—a period when I fancy I see the human soul like a brilliant gem, illustrious in the dust. What noble struggles did then the human reason make to free itself from the incumbent load of darkness and error! Then lived

Those numerous worthies, whose names are yet precious to posterity. What greatness of soul—what a taste for solid glory—what elevated sentiments did they not discover? Yet these men, so far superior to the rest of their species, acknowledged a multiplicity of Deities, whose moral characters were infinitely inferior to their own, and to whom they scrupled not to ascribe actions which themselves would have blushed to acknowledge. Every passion of the human mind was personified, and deified; statues graced every corner of their streets. Yet were there not wanting some among them who made bold advances in search of better information—like benighted travellers they followed the most distant gleam of light, yet all they could obtain was doubt and obscurity.

At this period, when reason had done all it could do to regain its native rights and privileges—the Saviour of the world appeared, at whose sacred presence idolatry fled, and the knowledge of the one true God began to enlighten mankind. They were no longer compelled to enquire, “Where is God our Maker? They knew him, and were instructed in his divine worship. The doctrines which the divine Messiah taught, eminently tended to restore human nature to the rectitude and happiness it had lost—they were calculated to harmonize the passions—regulate the affections, and exalt the soul to a sense of her own dignity, by revealing, in the clearest terms, the immortality of her nature—a point which philosophy had long sought to explore through the dim veil of probable conjecture.

A cursory view of the tenets of Christianity is sufficient to evince, that they are designed to establish the happiness of mankind even in the present life. Consider the benevolence and charity they inculcate—the patience, meekness, moderation, contempt of worldly pleasures and enjoyments, the generous clemency to enemies; with the rest of that bright assemblage of virtues they enjoin, and you will confess it a matter of wonder that the felicity of Eden is not already restored to those countries where the religion of Christ is professed—and the reason it is not so can be none other, than that of the thousands who daily make profession of it, so few have a competent knowledge of its nature and design. Born in a Christian land, they think such a scrutiny superfluous. Thus they call themselves Christians, without having any thing of the spirit of Christ.—And thus the human race is still obnoxious to a thousand miseries, for want of applying to themselves the remedy which alone could put an end to moral evil.

May you, my dear girls, be effectually convinced of the inestimable value of this divine dispensation, and think with Dr. Young, that

“ A Christian is the highest style of man.”

There are no virtuous dispositions—no generous affections—no truly noble sentiments, that are not comprized in that sublime character. Possess it, my young friends, for no higher distinction, or greater felicity, can possibly be wished you by

CORNELIA.

LETTER

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TEMPER.

 TO A YOUNG LADY.

BY MRS. CHAPONE.

A GREAT point of importance, to your future happiness, my dear, is what your parents have, doubtless, been continually attentive to from your infancy, as it is impossible to undertake it too early—I mean the due regulation of your temper. Though you are in a great measure indebted to their forming hands, for whatever is good in it, you are sensible, no doubt, as every human creature is, of propensities to some infirmity of temper, which it must now be *your own* care to correct and to subdue; otherwise the pains that have hitherto been taken with you, may all become fruitless; and when you are your own mistress, you may relapse into those faults, which were originally in your nature, and which will require to be delicately watched and kept under, through the whole course of your life.

If you consider, that the constant tenor of the gospel precepts is to promote love, peace, and

good-will among men, you will not doubt that the cultivation of an amiable disposition is a great part of your religious duty; since nothing leads more directly to the breach of charity, and to the injury and molestation of your fellow-creatures, than the indulgence of an ill temper. Do not, therefore, think lightly of the offences you may commit, for want of a due command over it, or suppose yourself responsible for them to your fellow-creatures only; but be assured, you must give a strict account of them all to the Supreme Governor of the world, who has made this a great part of your appointed trial upon earth.

A woman, bred up in a religious manner, placed above the reach of want, and out of the way of sordid and scandalous vices, can have but few temptations to the flagrant breach of the divine laws. It particularly concerns her, therefore, to understand them in their full import, and to consider, how far she trespasses against them, by such actions as appear trivial, when compared with murder, adultery and theft, but which become of very great importance, by being frequently repeated, and occurring in the daily transactions of life.

The principal virtues or vices of a woman must be of a private and domestic kind. Within the circle of her own family and dependants lies her sphere of action—the scene of almost all those tasks and trials, which must determine her character, and her fate here, and hereafter. Reflect, for a moment, how much the happiness of her husband, children, and servants,

must depend on her temper; and you will see that the greatest good, or evil, which she ever may have in her power to do, may rise from her correcting or indulging its infirmities.

Though I wish the principle of duty towards God to be your ruling motive in the exercise of every virtue, yet, as human nature stands in need of all possible helps, let us not forget how essential it is to present happiness, and to the enjoyment of this life, to cultivate such a temper as is likewise indispensably requisite to the attainment of higher felicity in the life to come. The greatest outward blessings cannot afford enjoyment to a mind ruffled and uneasy within itself. A fit of ill-humour will spoil the finest entertainment, and is as real a torment as the most painful disease. Another unavoidable consequence of ill-temper is, the dislike and aversion of all who are witnesses to it, and, perhaps, the deep and lasting resentment of those, who suffer from its effects. We all, from social or self-love, earnestly desire the esteem and affection of our fellow-creatures; and, indeed, our condition makes them so necessary to us, that the wretch, who has forfeited them, must feel desolate and undone, deprived of all the best enjoyments and comforts the world can afford, and given up to his inward misery, unpitied and scorned. But this can never be the fate of a good natured person; whatever faults he may have, they will generally be treated with lenity; he will find an advocate in every humane heart; his errors will be lamented rather than abhorred; and his virtues will be viewed in the fairest

point of light. His good humour, without the help of great talents or acquirements, will make his company preferable to that of the most brilliant genius, in whom this quality is wanting. In short, it is almost impossible that you can be sincerely beloved by any body, without this engaging property, whatever other excellencies you may possess. But with it, you will scarcely fail of finding some friends and favourers, even though you should be destitute of almost every other advantage.

Perhaps you will say, "all this is very true, but our tempers are not in our own power—we are made with different dispositions, and, if mine is not amiable, it is rather my unhappiness than my fault." This, my dear, is commonly said by those who will not take the trouble to correct themselves. Yet be assured, it is a delusion, and will not avail in our justification before him, "who knoweth whereof we are made," and of what we are capable. It is true, we are not all equally happy in our dispositions. But human virtue consists, in cherishing and cultivating every good inclination, and in checking and subduing every propensity to evil. If you had been born with a bad temper, it might have been made a good one, at least, with regard to its outward effects, by education, reason and principle; and, though you are so happy as to have a good one while young, do not suppose it will always continue so, if you neglect to maintain a proper command over it. Power, sickness, disappointments or worldly cares, may corrupt and embitter the finest disposition, if they are not counteracted by reason and religion.

It is observed, that every temper is inclined, in some degree, either to passion, peevishness, or obstinacy. Many are so unfortunate as to be inclined to each of the three in turn; it is necessary, therefore, to watch the bent of our nature, and to apply the remedies proper for the infirmity, to which we are most liable. With regard to the first, it is so injurious to society, and so odious in itself, especially in the female character, that one would think shame alone would be sufficient to preserve a young woman from giving way to it; for it is as unbecoming her character to be betrayed into ill behaviour by *passion* as by *intoxication*; and she ought to be ashamed of the one, as much as of the other. Gentleness, meekness, and patience, are her peculiar distinctions; and an enraged woman is one of the most disgusting sights in nature.

It is plain, from experience, that the most passionate people can command themselves, when they have a motive sufficiently strong—such as the presence of those they fear, or to whom they particularly desire to recommend themselves. It is therefore no excuse to persons, whom you have injured by unkind reproaches, and unjust aspersions, to tell them you were in a passion. The allowing yourself to speak to them in a passion, is a proof of an insolent disrespect, which the meanest of your fellow-creatures would have a right to resent. When once you find yourself heated so far, as to desire to say what you know would be provoking and wounding to another, you should immediately resolve either to be silent or to

quit the room, rather than give utterance to any thing dictated by so bad an inclination. Be assured, you are then unfit to reason or to reprove, or to hear reason from others. It is therefore your part to retire from such an occasion of sin; and wait till you are cool, before you presume to judge of what has passed. By accustoming yourself thus to conquer and disappoint your anger, you will, by degrees, find it grow weak and manageable, so as to leave your reason at liberty. You will be able to restrain your tongue from evil, and your looks and gestures from all expressions of violence and ill-will. Pride, which produces so many evils in the human mind, is the great source of passion. Whoever cultivates in himself a proper humility, a due sense of his own faults and insufficiencies, and a due respect for others, will find but small temptation to violent or unreasonable anger.

In the case of real injuries, which justify and call for resentment, there is a noble and generous kind of anger, a proper and necessary part of our nature, which has nothing in it sinful or degrading. I would not wish you insensible to this; for the person, who feels not an injury, must be incapable of being properly affected by benefits. With those, who treat you ill without provocation, you ought to maintain your own dignity. But, in order to do this, while you show a sense of their improper behaviour you must preserve calmness and even good breeding—and thereby convince them of the impotence, as well as injustice of their ma-

lice. You must also weigh every circumstance with candour and charity, and consider whether your showing the resentment deserved, may not produce ill consequences to innocent persons—as is almost always the case in family quarrels—and whether it may not occasion the breach of some duty, or necessary connexion, to which you ought to sacrifice even your just resentments. Above all things, take care that a particular offence to you, does not make you unjust to the general character of the offending person. Generous anger does not preclude esteem for what is really estimable, nor does it destroy good will to the person of its object; it even inspires the desire of overcoming him by benefits, and wishes to inflict no other punishment, than the regret of having injured one, who deserved his kindness. It is always placable, and ready to be reconciled, as soon as the offender is convinced of his error; nor can any subsequent injury provoke it to recur to past disobligations, which had been once forgiven. But it is perhaps unnecessary to give rules for this case.—The consciousness of injured innocence naturally produces dignity, and usually prevents excess of anger. Our passion is most unruly when we are conscious of blame, and when we apprehend that we have laid ourselves open to contempt. Where we know we have been wrong, the least injustice in the degree of blame imputed to us, excites our bitterest resentment; but, where we know ourselves faultless, the sharpest accusation excites pity or contempt, rather than rage. Whenever, therefore, you

feel yourself very angry, suspect yourself to be in the wrong, and resolve to stand the *decision* of your own conscience before you cast upon another the punishment, which is perhaps due to yourself. This self-examination will at least give you time to cool, and, if you are just, will dispose you to balance your own wrong with *that* of your antagonist, and to settle the account with him on equal terms.

Peevishness, though not so violent, and fatal in its immediate effects, is still more unamiable than passion, and, if possible, more destructive of happiness, in as much as it operates more continually. Though the fretful man injures us less, he disgusts us more than the passionate one—because he betrays a low and little mind intent on trifles, and engrossed by paltry self-love, which knows not how to bear the very apprehension of any inconveniences. It is self-love, then, which we must combat, when we find ourselves assaulted by this infirmity; and by voluntary enduring inconveniences, we shall habituate ourselves to bear them with ease and good humour when occasioned by others. Perhaps this is the best kind of religious mortification, as the chief end of denying ourselves any innocent indulgences must be, to acquire a habit of command over our passions and inclinations, particularly such as are likely to lead us into evil. Another method of conquering this enemy, is, to abstract our minds from that attention to trifling circumstances, which usually creates this uneasiness. Those who are engaged in high and important pursuits, are

very little affected by small inconveniences: The man, whose head is full of studious thought, or whose heart is full of care, will eat his dinner without knowing whether it was well or ill dressed, or whether it was served punctually at the hour or not; and though absence from the common things of life is far from desirable—especially in a woman—yet too minute and anxious an attention to them seldom fails to produce a teasing, mean, and fretful disposition. I would, therefore, wish your mind to have always some objects in pursuit worthy of it, that it may not be engrossed by such as are in themselves scarce worth a moment's anxiety. It is chiefly in the decline of life, when amusements fail, and when the more importunate passions subside, that this infirmity is observed to grow upon us—and perhaps it will seldom fail to do so, unless carefully watched and counteracted by reason. We must then endeavour to substitute some pursuits in place of those, which can only engage us in the beginning of our course. The pursuit of glory and happiness in another life, by every means of improving and exalting our own minds, becomes more and more interesting to us, the nearer we draw to the end of all sublunary enjoyments. Reading, reflection, rational conversation, and, above all, conversing with God, by prayer and meditation, may preserve us from taking that anxious interest in the little comforts and conveniences of our remaining days, which usually give birth to so much fretfulness in old people. But though the aged and infirm are most liable to this evil—and

they alone are to be pitied for it—yet we sometimes see the young, the healthy, and those who enjoy most outward blessings, inexcusably guilty of it. The smallest disappointment in pleasure, or difficulty in the most trifling employment, will put wilful young people out of temper, and their very amusements frequently become sources of vexation and peevishness. How often have I seen a girl, preparing for a ball, or for some other public appearance—unable to satisfy her own vanity—fret over every ornament she put on, quarrel with her maid, with her clothes, her hair; and growing still more unlovely as she grew more cross, be ready to fight with her looking-glass, for not making her as handsome as she wished to be! She did not consider that the traces of this ill-humour on her countenance would be a greater disadvantage to her appearance than any defect in her dress—or even than the plainest features enlivened by joy and good humour. There is a degree of resignation necessary even to the enjoyment of pleasure; we must be ready and willing to give up some part of what we could wish for, before we can enjoy that which is indulged to us. I have no doubt, that she, who frets all the while she is dressing for an assembly, will suffer still greater uneasiness when she is there. The same craving, restless vanity, will there endure a thousand mortifications, which in the midst of seeming pleasure, will secretly corrode her heart; whilst the meek and humble, generally find more gratification than they expected, and return home, pleased and enlivened

from every scene of amusement, though they could have staid away from it with perfect ease and contentment.

Sullenness, or obstinacy, is perhaps a worse fault of temper than either of the former—and, if indulged, may end in the most fatal extremes of stubborn melancholy, malice and revenge. The resentment which, instead of being expressed, is nursed in secret, and continually aggravated by the imagination, will, in time, become the ruling passion; and then, how horrible must be his case, whose kind and pleasurable affections are all swallowed up by the tormenting, as well as detestable sentiments of hatred and revenge?—" * Admonish thy friend, peradventure he hath not done it; or, if he hath, that he do it no more.—Admonish thy friend, peradventure he hath not said it; or if he hath, that he speak it not again."—Brood not over a sentiment which perhaps was at first ill grounded, and which is undoubtedly heightened by a heated imagination. But, when you have first subdued your own temper, so as to be able to speak calmly, reasonably, and kindly, then expostulate with the person you suppose to be in fault—hear what she has to say; and either reconcile yourself to her, or quiet your mind under the injury, by the principle of christian charity. But if it should appear that you yourself have been most to blame, or if you have been in an error, acknowledge it fairly and handsomely; if you feel any reluctance to do

Ecclus. xix. 13.

so, be certain that it arises from pride, to conquer which is an absolute duty—"A soft answer turneth away wrath;" and a generous confession oftentimes more than atones for the fault which requires it. Truth and justice demand that we should acknowledge conviction, as soon as we feel it, and not maintain an erroneous opinion, or justify a wrong conduct, merely for the false shame of confessing our past ignorance. A false shame it undoubtedly is, and as impolitic as unjust; since your error is already seen by those who endeavour to set you right. But your conviction, and the candour and generosity of owning it freely, may still be an honour to you, and would greatly recommend you to the person with whom you disputed. With a disposition strongly inclined to sullenness or obstinacy, this must be a very painful exertion: and, to make a perfect conquest over yourself, may, at once, perhaps, appear impracticable, while the zeal of self-justification, and the abhorrence of blame, are strong upon you. But, if you are so unhappy as to yield to your infirmity, at one time, do not let this discourage you from renewing your efforts. Your mind will gain strength from the contest; and your internal enemy will, by degrees, be forced to give ground. Be not afraid to revive the subject, as soon as you find yourself able to subdue your temper; and then frankly lay open the conflict you sustained at the time; by this you will make all the amends in your power for your fault, and will certainly change the disgust, you have given, at least into pity, if not admiration.

Nothing is more endearing than such a confession—and you will find such a satisfaction in your own consciousness, and in the renewed tenderness and esteem you will gain from the person concerned, that your task for the future will be made more easy, and your reluctance to be convinced, will, on every occasion, grow less and less.

The love of truth, and a real desire of improvement, ought to be the only motives of argumentation. And, where these are sincere, no difficulty can be made of embracing the truth, as soon as it is perceived. But, in fact, people oftener dispute from vanity and pride, which make it a grievous mortification to allow that we are the wiser for what we have heard from another. To receive advice, reproof, and instruction, properly, is the surest sign of a sincere and humble heart—and shows a greatness of mind, which commands our respect and reverence, while it appears so willingly to yield to us the superiority.

Observe, notwithstanding, that I do not wish you to hear of your faults without pain; such an indifference would afford small hopes of amendment. Shame and remorse are the first steps to true repentance; yet we should be willing to bear this pain, and thankful to the kind hand that inflicts it for our good. Nor must we, by sullen silence under it, leave our kind physician in doubt, whether the operation has taken effect or not, or whether it has not added another malady, instead of curing the first. You must consider, that those who tell you of your faults, if

they do it from motives of kindness and not of malice, exert their friendship in a painful office, which must have cost them as great an effort, as it can be to you to acknowledge the service; and, if you refuse this encouragement, you cannot expect that any one, who is not absolutely obliged to it by duty, will, a second time, undertake such an ill requited trouble. What a loss would this be to yourself!—how difficult would be our progress to that degree of perfection, which is necessary to our happiness, was it not for the assistance we receive from each other!—this certainly is one of the means of grace held out to us by our merciful Judge, and, if we reject it, we are answerable for all the miscarriages we may fall into for want of it.

I know not, whether that strange caprice, that inequality of taste and behaviour, so commonly attributed to our sex, may properly be called a fault of temper—as it seems not to be connected with, or arising from our animal frame, but to be rather the fruit of our own self-indulgence, degenerating by degrees into such a wantonness of will, as knows not how to please itself. When, instead of regulating our actions by reason and principle, we suffer ourselves to be guided by every slight and momentary impulse of inclination, we shall, doubtless, appear so variable and inconstant, that nobody can guess, by our behaviour to-day, what may be expected from us to-morrow; nor can we ourselves tell whether what we delighted in a week ago, will now afford us the least degree of pleasure. It is in vain for others to attempt to

please us—we cannot please ourselves, though all we could wish for waits our choice; and thus does a capricious woman become, “sick of herself, through very selfishness:” And, when this is the case, it is easy to judge how sick others must be of her, and how contemptible and disgusting she must appear. This wretched state is the usual consequence of power and flattery. May my dear child never meet with the temptation of that excessive and ill judged indulgence from a husband, which she has happily escaped from her parents, which seldom fails to reduce women to the miserable condition of a humoured child, always unhappy from having nobody’s will to study but its own! The insolence of such demands for yourself, and such disregard to the choice and inclinations of others, can seldom fail to make you as many enemies as there are persons obliged to bear with your humours; whilst a compliant, reasonable, and contented disposition would render you happy in yourself, and beloved by all your companions—particularly by those, who live constantly with you; and, of what consequence this is to your happiness, a moment’s reflection will convince you. Family friendships are the friendships made for us, if I may so speak, by God himself. With the kindest intentions, he has knit the bands of family love, by indispensable duties; and wretched are they, who have burst them asunder by violence and ill-will, or worn them out by constant little disobligations, and by the want of that attention to please, which the presence of a stranger always inspires, but

which is so often shamefully neglected towards those, whom it is most our duty and interest to please. May you, my dear, be wise enough to see that every faculty of entertainment, every engaging qualification, which you possess is exerted to the best advantage for those, whose love is of most importance to you—for those who live under the same roof, and with whom you are connected for life, either by the ties of blood, or by the still more sacred obligations of a voluntary engagement.

To make you the delight and darling of your family, something more is required than barely to be exempt from ill temper and 'troublesome humours. The sincere and genuine smiles of complacency and love must adorn your countenance. That ready compliance, that alertness to assist and oblige, which demonstrates true affection, must animate your behaviour, and endear your most common actions. Politeness must accompany your greatest familiarities, and restrain you from every thing that is really offensive, or which can give a moment's unnecessary pain. Conversation, which is so apt to grow dull and insipid in families, nay, in some to be almost wholly laid aside, must be cultivated with the frankness and openness of friendship, and by the mutual communication of whatever may conduce to the improvement or innocent entertainment of each other.

Reading, whether apart or in common, will furnish useful and pleasing subjects; and the sprightliness of youth will naturally inspire harmless mirth and native humour, if encou-

raged by a mutual desire of diverting each other, and by making the hours pass agreeably in your own house: every amusement that offers will be heightened by the participation of these dear companions, and by talking over every incident together and every object of pleasure. If you have any acquired talent of entertainment, such as music, painting, or the like, your own family are those before whom you should most wish to excel, and for whom you should always be ready to exert yourself; not suffering the accomplishments which you have gained, perhaps by their means, and at their expense, to lie dormant, till the arrival of a stranger gives you spirit in the performance. Where this last is the case, you may be sure vanity is the only motive of the exertion. A stranger will praise you more. But how little sensibility has that heart, which is not more gratified by the silent pleasure painted on the countenance of a partial parent, or of an affectionate brother, than by the empty compliments of a visitor, who is perhaps inwardly more disposed to criticise and ridicule than to admire you!

I have been longer in this letter than I intended; yet it is with difficulty I can quit the subject, because I think it is seldom sufficiently insisted on, either in books or in sermons—and because there are many persons weak enough, to believe themselves in a safe and innocent course of life, while they are daily harassing every body about them by their vexatious humours. But you will, I hope, constantly

bear in mind that you can never treat a fellow creature unkindly, without offending the kind Creator and Father of all,—and that you can no way render yourself so acceptable to him, as by studying to promote the happiness of others, in every instance, small as well as great—The favour of God, and the love of your companions, will surely be deemed rewards sufficient to animate your most fervent endeavours; yet this is not all. The disposition of mind, which I would recommend, is its own reward, and is in itself essential to happiness. Cultivate it, therefore, my dear child, with your utmost diligence—and watch the symptoms of ill-temper, as they rise, with a firm resolution to conquer them, before they are even perceived by any other person. In every such inward conflict, call upon your Maker to assist the feeble nature he hath given you—and sacrifice to *Him* every feeling that would tempt you to disobedience. So will you at length attain that true christian meekness, which is blessed in the sight of God and man; “which has the promise of this life, “as well as of that which is to come.” Then will you pity, in others, those infirmities, which you have conquered in yourself; and will think yourself as much bound to assist, by your patience and gentleness, those who are so unhappy as to be under the dominion of evil passions, as you are to impart a share of your riches to the poor and miserable.

A LETTER

**TO A VERY YOUNG LADY ON HER
MARRIAGE.**

==
BY DEAN SWIFT.
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MADAM,

THE hurry and impertinence of receiving and paying visits on account of your marriage, being now over, you are beginning to enter into a course of life, where you will want much advice to divert you from falling into many errors, fopperies, and follies, to which your sex is subject. I have always borne an entire friendship for your father and mother: and the person they have chosen for your husband, hath been, for some years past, my particular favourite. I have long wished you might come together; because I hoped, that from the goodness of your disposition, and by following the counsel of wise friends, you might, in time, make yourself worthy of him. Your parents were so far in the right, that they did not produce you much into the world, whereby you avoided many wrong steps, which others have taken, and have fewer ill impressions to be removed. But they failed, as it is generally the

case, in too much neglecting to cultivate your mind; without which it is impossible to acquire or preserve the friendship and esteem of a wise man, who soon grows weary of acting the lover, and treating his wife like a mistress, but wants a reasonable companion, and a true friend, through every stage of his life. It must be, therefore, your business to qualify yourself for those offices; wherein I will not fail to be your director, as long as I shall think you deserve it, by letting you know how you are to act, and what you are to avoid.

And beware of despising or neglecting my instructions, whereon will depend not only your making a good figure in the world, but your own real happiness, as well as that of the person who ought to be the dearest to you.

I must, therefore, desire you, in the first place, to be very slow in changing the *modest behaviour* of a *virgin*: It is usual in young wives, before they have been many weeks married, to assume a bold, forward look and manner of talking, as if they intended to signify, in all companies, that they were no longer girls, and consequently that their whole demeanor, before they got a husband, was all but a countenance and constraint upon their nature; whereas, I suppose if the votes of wise men were gathered, a very great majority would be in favour of those ladies, who, after they were entered into that state, rather chose to double their portion of modesty and reservedness.

I must likewise warn you strictly against the least degree of *fondness* to your husband, before

any witness whatsoever, even before your nearest relations, or the very maids of your chamber. This proceeding is so exceeding odious and disgusting to all who have either good breeding or good sense, that they assign two very unamiable reasons for it: the one is gross hypocrisy; and the other has too bad a name to mention. If there is any difference to be made, your husband is the lowest person in company, either at home or abroad; and every gentleman present has a better claim to all marks of civility and distinction from you. Conceal your esteem and love in your own breast, and reserve your kind looks and language for private hours, which are so many in the four and twenty, that they will afford time to employ a passion as exalted as any that was ever described in a *French* romance.

Upon this head, I should likewise advise you to differ in practice from those ladies who affect abundance of *uneasiness* while their husbands are abroad—start with every knock at the door—and ring the bell incessantly for the servants, to let in their master; will not eat a bit at dinner or supper, if the husband happens to stay out; and receive him at his return, with such a medley of chiding and kindness, and catechising him where he has been, that a shrew from *Billingsgate* would be a more easy, and eligible companion.

Of the same leaven are those wives, who, when their husbands are gone a journey, must have a letter every post, upon pain of fits and hysterics, and a day must be fixed for their re-

turn home, without the least allowance for business, or sickness, or accidents, or weather: upon which, I can only say, that in my observation, those ladies who are apt to make the greatest clutter on such occasions, would liberally have paid a messenger for bringing them news, that their husbands had broken their necks on the road.

You will perhaps be offended, when I advise you to abate a little of that violent passion for *fine clothes*, so predominant in your sex. It is a little hard, that ours, for whose sake you wear them, are not admitted to be of your council. I may venture to assure you, that we will make an abatement at any time of four pounds a yard, in a brocade, if the ladies will but allow a suitable addition of care in the *cleanliness* and sweetness of their persons. For the satirical part of mankind will needs believe, that it is not impossible to be very fine and very filthy; and that the capacities of a lady are sometimes apt to fall short in cultivating cleanliness and finery together. I shall only add, upon so tender a subject, what a pleasant gentleman said concerning a silly woman of quality; that nothing could make her supportable but cutting off her head; for his ears were offended by her tongue, and his nose by her hair and teeth.

I am wholly at a loss how to advise you in the choice of *company*, which, however, is a point of as great importance, as any in your life. If your general acquaintance be among ladies, who are your equals or superiors, pro-

vided they have nothing of what is commonly called an ill reputation, you think you are safe; and this, in the style of the world, will pass for good company. Whereas I am afraid it will be hard for you to pick out one female acquaintance in this town, from whom you will not be in manifest danger of contracting some foppery, affectation, vanity, folly or vice. Your only safe way of conversing with them is, by a firm resolution to proceed, in your practice and behaviour, directly contrary to whatever they should say and do: and this I take to be a good general rule, with very few exceptions. For instance: in the doctrines they usually deliver to young married women for managing their husbands—their several accounts of their own conduct in that particular, to recommend it to your imitation—the reflections they make upon others of their sex for acting differently—their directions how to come off with victory upon any dispute or quarrel you may have with your husband—the arts, by which you may discover and practise upon his weak side—when to work by flattery and insinuation—when to melt him with tears, and when to engage with a high hand. In these, and a thousand other cases, it will be prudent to retain as many of their lectures in your memory as you can, and then determine to act in full opposition to them all.

I hope your husband will interpose his authority to limit you in the trade of *visiting*: half a dozen fools are, in all conscience, as many as you should require; and it will be sufficient for you to see them twice a year. For I

think the fashion does not exact, that visits should be paid to friends.

I advise that your company at home should consist of men, rather than women. To say the truth, I never yet knew a tolerable woman to be fond of her own sex. I confess, when both are mixed and well chosen, and put their best qualities forward, there may be an intercourse of civility and good-will; which, with the addition of some degree of sense, can make conversation or any amusement agreeable. But a knot of ladies, got together by themselves, is a very school of impertinence and detraction, and it is well if those be the worst.

Let your men-acquaintance be of your husband's choice, and not recommended to you by any she-companions; because they will certainly fix a coxcomb upon you; and it will cost you some time and pains before you can arrive at the knowledge of distinguishing such a one from a man of sense.

Never take a *favourite waiting-maid* into your cabinet-council, to entertain you with histories of those ladies whom she hath formerly served, of their diversions and their dresses; to insinuate how great a fortune you brought, and how little you are allowed to squander; to appeal to her from your husband, and to be determined by her judgment, because you are sure it will be always for you; to receive and discard servants by her approbation or dislike; to engage you, by her insinuations, into misunderstandings with your best friends; to represent all

things in false colours, and to be the common emissary of scandal.

But the grand affair of your life will be to gain and preserve the friendship and esteem of your *husband*. You are married to a man of good education and learning, of an excellent understanding, and an exact taste. It is true, and it is happy for you, that these qualities in him are adorned with great modesty, a most amiable sweetness of temper, and an unusual disposition to sobriety and virtue. But neither good-nature nor virtue will suffer him to esteem you against his judgment; and though he is not capable of using you ill, yet you will in time grow a thing indifferent, and perhaps, contemptible, unless you can supply the loss of youth and beauty, with more durable qualities. You have a very few years to be young and handsome in the eyes of the world; and as few months to be so in the eyes of a husband who is not a fool; for I hope you do not still dream of charms and raptures, which marriage ever did, and ever will, put a sudden end to. Besides your's was a match of prudence and common good-liking, without any mixture of that ridiculous passion, which has no being but in play-books and romances.

You must therefore use all endeavours to attain to some degree of those accomplishments which your husband most values in other people, and for which he is most valued himself. You must improve your mind, by closely pursuing such a method of study as I shall direct or approve of. You must get a collection of

history and travels, which I will recommend to you, and spend some hours every day in reading them, and making extracts from them, if your memory be weak. You must invite persons of knowledge and understanding to an acquaintance with you, by whose conversation you may learn to correct your taste and judgment; and when you can bring yourself to comprehend and relish the good sense of others, you will arrive in time to think rightly yourself, and to become a reasonable and agreeable companion. This must produce, in your husband, a true, rational love and esteem for you, which old age will not diminish. He will have regard for your judgment and opinion in matters of the greatest weight; you will be able to entertain each other without a third person to relieve you by finding discourse. The endowments of your mind will even make your person more agreeable to him; and when you are alone, your time will not lie heavy upon your hands, for want of some trifling amusement.

As little respect as I have for the generality of your sex, it hath sometimes moved me with pity, to see the lady of the house forced to withdraw immediately after dinner, and this in families where there is not much drinking; as if it were an established maxim, that women are incapable of all conversation. In a room where both sexes meet, if the men are discoursing upon any general subject, the ladies never think it their business to partake in what passes, but in a separate club entertain each other with the price and choice of lace, and silk,

and what dresses they liked or disapproved at the church or the play-house. And when you are among yourselves, how naturally, after the first compliments, do you apply your hands to each other's lappets and ruffles, and mantuas, as if the whole business of your lives, and the public concern of the world, depended upon the cut or colour of your dresses. As divines say, that some people take more pains to be damned, than it would cost them to be saved; so your sex employs more thought, memory and application, to be fools, than would serve to make them wise and useful. When I reflect on this, I cannot conceive you to be human creatures, but a sort of species hardly a degree above a monkey; which has more diverting tricks than any of you; is an animal less mischievous and expensive; might in time be a tolerable critic in velvet and brocade; and, for aught I know, would equally become them.

I would have you look upon finery as a necessary folly, as all great ladies did, whom I have ever known. I did not desire you to be out of the fashion, but to be last and least in it. I expect that your dress shall be one degree lower than your fortune can afford; and in your own heart, I would wish you to be an utter contemner of all distinctions which a finer petticoat can give you; because it will neither make you richer, handsomer, younger, better natured, more virtuous, or wise, than if it hung upon a peg.

If you are in company with men of learning, though they happen to discourse of arts and

sciences out of your compass, yet you will gather more advantage by listening to them, than from all the nonsense and frippery of your own sex; but if they be men of breeding as well as learning, they will seldom engage in any conversation where you ought not to be a hearer, and in time have your part. If they talk of the manners and customs of the several kingdoms of Europe, of travels into remoter nations, of the state of their own country, or of the great men and actions of Greece and Rome; if they give their judgment upon English and French writers, either in verse or prose, or of the nature and limits of virtue and vice, it is a shame for an English lady not to relish such discourses, not to improve by them, and endeavour, by reading and information, to have her share in those entertainments, rather than turn aside, as it is the usual custom, and consult with the woman who sits next her, about a new cargo of fans.

It is a little hard, that not one gentleman's daughter in a thousand should be brought to read or understand her own natural tongue, or to be a judge of the easiest books that are written in it; as any one may find, who can have the patience to hear them, when they are disposed to mangle a play or novel, where the least word out of the common road is sure to disconcert them. It is no wonder, when they are not so much as taught to spell in their childhood, nor can ever attain to it in their whole lives. I advise you, therefore, to read aloud, more or less, every day to your husband, if he

will permit you, or to any other friend (but not a female one) who is able to set you right; and as for spelling, you may compass it in time, by making collections from the books you read.

I know very well that those, who are commonly called learned women, have lost all manner of credit by their impertinent talkativeness and conceit of themselves; but there is an easy remedy for this, if you once consider, that after all the pains you may be at, you never can arrive, in point of learning, to the perfection of a school boy. The reading I would advise you to, is only for improvement of your own good sense, which will never fail of being mended by discretion. It is a wrong method, and ill choice of books, that makes those learned ladies just so much worse for what they have read. And therefore it shall be my care to direct you better, a task for which I take myself to be not ill-qualified; because I have spent more time, and have had more opportunities than many others, to observe and discover from what sources the various follies of women are derived.

Pray observe how insignificant things are the common race of ladies, when they have passed their youth and beauty; how contemptible they appear to the men, and yet more contemptible to the younger part of their own sex; and have no relief but in passing their afternoons in visits, where they are never acceptable; and their evenings at cards among each other; while the former part of the day is spent in spleen and envy, or, in vain endeavours to re-

pair, by art and dress, the ruins of time. Whereas I have known ladies at sixty, to whom all the polite part of the court and town paid their addresses, without any farther view than that of enjoying the pleasure of their conversation.

I am ignorant of any one quality that is amiable in a man, which is not equally so in a woman: I do not except even modesty and gentleness of nature. Nor do I know one vice or folly which is not equally detestable in both. There is, indeed, one infirmity which seems to be generally allowed you, I mean that of *cowardice*: yet there should seem to be something very capricious, that when women profess their admiration for a colonel or a captain on account of his valour, they should fancy it a very graceful, becoming quality in themselves, to be afraid of their own shadows, to scream in a barge when the weather is calmest, or in a coach at the ring; to run from a cow at a hundred yards distance, to fall into fits at the sight of a spider, an ear-wig, or a frog. At least, if cowardice be a sign of cruelty, (as it is generally granted) I can hardly think it an accomplishment so desirable as to be thought worth improving by affectation

And as the same virtues equally become both sexes, so there is no quality whereby women endeavour to distinguish themselves from men, for which they are not just so much the worse, except that only of reservedness; which, however, as you generally manage it, is nothing else but affectation or hypocrisy. For as you

cannot too much discountenance those of our sex, who presume to take unbecoming liberties before you; so you ought to be wholly unconstrained in the company of deserving men, when you have had sufficient experience of their discretion.

There is never wanting in this town, a tribe of bold, swaggering, rattling ladies, whose talents pass among coxcombs for wit and humour; their excellency lies in rude, shocking expressions, and what they call *running a man down*. If a gentleman in their company happens to have any blemish in his birth or person, if any misfortune hath befallen his family or himself, for which he is ashamed, they will be sure to give him broad hints of it without any provocation. I would recommend you to the acquaintance of a common prostitute, rather than to that of such termagants as these. I have often thought that no man is obliged to suppose such creatures to be women; but rather ought to treat them like insolent scoundrels, disguised in female habits, who ought to be stript and kicked out of company.

I will add one thing, although it be a little out of place, which is, to desire, that you will learn to value, and esteem your husband, for those good qualities which he really possesseth, and not to fancy others in him which he certainly hath not. For although this latter is generally understood to be a mark of love, yet it is indeed nothing but affectation or ill-judgment. It is true, he wants so very few accomplishments, that you are in no great danger of er-

ring on this side ; but my caution is occasioned by a lady of your acquaintance, married to a very valuable person, whom yet she is so unfortunate as to be always commending for those perfections to which he can least pretend.

I can give you no advice upon the article of *expense*, only I think you ought to be well-informed how much your husband's revenue amounts to, and be so good a computer as to keep within it, in that part of the management which falls to your share ; and not to put yourself in the number of those politic ladies, who think they gain a great point, when they have teased their husbands to buy them a new equipage, a laced head, or a fine petticoat, without once considering what long scores remain unpaid to the butcher.

I desire you will keep this letter in your cabinet, and often examine impartially your whole conduct by it : and so God bless you, and make you a fair example to your sex, and a perpetual comfort to your husband and your parents. I am, with great truth and affection,

Madam,

Your most faithful Friend,

and humble Servant.

FABLES
FOR THE FEMALE SEX.

BY EDWARD MOORE.

FABLE I.

THE EAGLE AND THE ASSEMBLY OF BIRDS.

To Her Royal Highness

THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

THE moral lay, to beauty due,
I write, *fair excellence*, to you;
Well pleas'd to hope my vacant hours
Have been employ'd to sweeten yours.
Truth under fiction I impart,
To weed out folly from the heart,
And show the paths, that lead astray
The wand'ring nymph from wisdom's way,
I flatter none. The great and good
Are by their actions understood;
Your monument if actions raise,
Shall I deface by idle praise?
I echo not the voice of fame,
That dwells delighted on your name;
Her friendly tale, however true,
Were flatt'ry if I told it you.

The proud, the envious, and the vain,
The jilt, the prude, demand my strain;

To these, detesting praise, I writë,
 And vent, in charity, my spite.
 With friendly hand I hold the glass
 To all, promiscuous as they pass;
 Should folly there her likeness view,
 I fret not that the mirror's true.
 If the fantastic form offend,
 I made it not, but would amend.

Virtue, in every clime and age,
 Spurns at the folly-soothing page,
 While Satire, that offends the ear
 Of Vice and Passion, pleases her.
 Premising this, your anger spare,
 And claim the fable, you who dare.

The birds in place, by factions press'd,
 To Jupiter their pray'rs address'd;
 By specious lies the state was vex'd,
 Their counsels libellers perplex'd.
 They begg'd (to stop seditious tongues)
 A gracious hearing of their wrongs.
 Jove grants their suit. The eagle sate,
 Decider of the grand debate.

The pye, to trust and pow'r preferr'd
 Demands permission to be heard.
 Says he, prolixity of phrase
 You know I hate. This libel says,
 "Some birds there are, who prone to noise,
 Are hir'd to silence wisdom's voice;
 And, skill'd to chatter out the hour,
 Rise by their emptiness to pow'r.
 That this is aim'd direct at me,
 No doubt, you'll readily agree;
 Yet well this sage assembly knows,
 By parts of government I rose;

My prudent counsels prop the state;
Magpies were never known to prate.

The kite rose up. His honest heart
In Virtue's suff'rings bore a part.
That there were birds of prey, he knew:
So far the libeller said true.

“Voracious, bold, to rapine prone,
Who knew no int'rest but their own;
Who, hov'ring o'er the farmer's yard,
Nor pigeon, chick, nor duckling spar'd.”
This might be true; but if apply'd
To him, in troth, the sland'rer ly'd.
Since Ign'rance then might be misled,
Such things, he thought, were best unsaid.

The crow was vext. As yester-morn
He flew across the new-sown corn,
A screaming boy was set, for pay,
He knew, to drive the crows away:
Scandal had found him out in turn,
And buzz'd abroad, that crows love corn,

The owl arose, with solemn face,
And thus harangu'd upon the case.
That magpies prate it may be true;
A kite may be voracious too;
Crows sometimes deal in new-sown pease;
He libels not, who strikes at these.
The slander's here—“But there are birds,
Whose wisdom lies in looks, not words:
Blund'ers who level in the dark,
And always shoot beside the mark.”
He names not me: but these are hints,
Which manifest at whom he squints;
I were, indeed, that blund'ring fowl,
To question if he meant an owl.

“Ye wretches, hence!” the eagle cries:
 “’Tis conscience, conscience that applies;
 The virtuous mind takes no alarm,
 Secur’d by Innocence from harm,
 While Guilt, and his associate, Fear,
 Are startled at the passing air.”

FABLE II.

The Panther, the Horse, and other Beasts.

THE man who seeks to win the fair,
 (So custom says) must truth forbear;
 Must fawn and flatter, cringe and lie,
 And raise the goddess to the sky;
 For truth is hateful to her ear,
 A rudeness which she cannot bear——
 A rudeness?—Yes—I speak my thoughts:
 For truth upbraids her with her faults.

How wretched, Chloe, then am I,
 Who love you, and yet cannot lie,
 And still to make you less my friend,
 I strive your errors to amend!
 But shall the senseless fop impart
 The softest passions to your heart,
 While he, who tells you honest truth,
 And points to happiness your youth,
 Determines, by his care, his lot,
 And lives neglected and forgot:

Trust me, my dear, with greater ease,
 Your taste for flatt’ry I could please.
 And similes in each dull line,
 Like glow-worms in the dark, should shine.
 What if I say your lips disclose
 The freshness of the op’ning rose?

Or that your cheeks are beds of flow'rs,
Enrip'ned by refreshing show'rs?

Yet certain as these flow'rs shall fade,
Time ev'ry beauty will invade.

The butterfly of various hue,
More than the flow'r, resembles you;

Fair, flutt'ring, fickle, busy thing,

To pleasure ever on the wing,

Gayly coquetting for an hour,

To die, and ne'er be thought of more.

Would you the bloom of youth should last?

'Tis virtue that must bind it fast,

An easy carriage, wholly free

From sour reserve, or levity;

Good-natur'd mirth, an open heart,

And looks unskill'd in any part;

Humility, enough to own

The frailties, which a friend makes known,

And decent pride, enough to know

The worth that Virtue can bestow.

These are the charms which ne'er decay,

Tho' youth, and beauty fade away,

And Time, which all things else removes,

Still heightens virtue, and improves.

You'll frown, and ask, to what intent

This blunt address to you is sent?

I'll spare the question, and confess

I'd praise you, if I lov'd you less:

But rail, be angry, or complain,

I will be rude, while you are vain:

Beneath a lion's peaceful reign,

When beast met friendly on the plain,

A panther, of majestic port,

(The vainest female of the court)

With spotted skin, and eyes of fire,
 Fill'd ev'ry bosom with desire,
 Where'er she mov'd, a servile croud
 Of fawning creatures cring'd and bow'd;
 Assemblies ev'ry week she held,
 (Like modern belles) with coxcombs fill'd;
 Where noise, and nonsense, and grimace,
 And lies and scandal, fill'd the place.

Behold the gay, fantastic thing,
 Encircled by the specious ring;
 Low-bowing, with important look,
 As first in rank, the monkey spoke.
 "Gad take me, madam, but I swear,
 No angel ever look'd so fair——
 Forgive my rudeness, but I vow,
 You were not quite divine till now.
 Those limbs! that shape! and then those eyes!
 O close them or the gazer dies?"

"Nay, gentle pug, for goodness hush,
 I vow, and swear, you make me blush;
 I shall be angry at this rate——
 'Tis so like flatt'ry, which I hate."

The fox, in deeper cunning vers'd,
 The beauties of her mind rehears'd,
 And talk'd of knowledge, taste and sense,
 To which the fair have vast pretence!
 Yet well he knew them always vain
 Of what they strive not to attain,
 And play'd so cunningly his part,
 That pug was rivall'd in his art.

The goat avow'd his am'rous flame,
 And burnt—for what he durst not name;
 Yet hop'd a meeting in the wood
 Might make his meaning understood.

Half angry at the bold address,
 She frown'd; but yet she must confess,
 Such beauties might inflame his blood,
 But still his phrase was somewhat rude.
 The hog her neatness much admir'd;
 The formal ass her swiftness fir'd;
 While all to feed her folly strove,
 And by their praises shar'd her love.
 The horse whose gen'rous heart disdain'd
 Applause, by servile flatt'ry gain'd,
 With graceful courage, silence broke,
 And thus with indignation spoke.
 When flatt'ring monkeys fawn and prate,
 They justly raise contempt, or hate:
 For merit's turn'd to ridicule,
 Applauded by the grinning fool.
 The artful fox your wit commends,
 To lure you to his selfish ends;
 From the vile flatt'rer turn away;
 For knaves make friendship to betray.
 Dismiss the train of fops, and fools,
 And learn to live by wisdom's rules.
 Such beauties might the lion warm,
 Did not your folly break the charm;
 For who would court that lovely shape,
 To be the rival of an ape?
 He said; and snorting in disdain,
 Spurn'd at the croud, and sought the plain.

FABLE III.

The Nightingale and Glow-worm.

THE prudent nymph, whose cheeks disclose
 The lily, and the blushing rose,

From public view her charms will skreen,
 And rarely in the croud be seen;
 This simple truth shall keep her wise,
 "The fairest fruits attract the flies."

One night, a glow-worm, proud and vain,
 Contemplating her glitt'ring train,
 Cry'd, "sure there never was in nature
 So elegant, so fine a creature!
 All other insects that I see
 The frugal ant, industrious bee,
 Or silk-worm, with contempt I view:
 With all that low, mechanic crew,
 Who servilely their lives employ,
 In business, enemy to joy.
 Mean, vulgar herd! ye are my scorn,
 For grandeur only I was born;
 Or sure am sprung from race divine,
 And plac'd on earth, to live and shine.
 Those lights that sparkle so on high,
 Are but the glow-worms of the sky;
 And kings on earth their gems admire,
 Because they imitate my fire."

She spoke. Attentive on a spray,
 A nightingale forbore his lay;
 He saw the shining morsel near,
 And flew, directed by the glare;
 Awhile he gaz'd with sober look,
 And thus the trembling prey bespoke.

"Deluded fool, with pride elate,
 Know, 'tis thy beauty brings thy fate;
 Less dazzling, long thou mightst have lain
 Unheeded on the velvet plain;
 Pride, soon or late, degraded mourns,
 And beauty wrecks whom she adorns."

FABLE IV.

Hymen and Death.

SIXTEEN, d'ye say! then 'tis time;
 Another year destroys your prime.
 But stay—The settlement! “That's made,”
 Why then's my simple girl afraid?
 Yet hold a moment, if you can,
 And heedfully the fable scan.

The shades were fled, the morning blush'd,
 The winds were in their caverns hush'd,
 When Hymen, pensive and sedate,
 Held o'er the fields his musing gait;
 Behind him, through the green-wood shade,
 Death's meagre form the God survey'd,
 Who quickly with gigantic stride,
 Out-went his pace and join'd his side.
 The chat on various subjects ran,
 Till angry Hymen thus began.

“Relentless death, whose iron sway,
 Mortals, reluctant, must obey,
 Still of thy pow'r shall I complain,
 And thy too-partial hand arraign?
 When Cupid brings a pair of hearts,
 All over-stuck with equal darts,
 Thy cruel shafts my hopes deride,
 And cut the knot, that Hymen ty'd.

“Shall not the bloody, and the bold,
 The miser hoarding up his gold,
 The harlot, recking from the stew,
 Alone thy fell revenge pursue?
 But must the gentle and the kind,
 Thy fury, undistinguish'd, find?”

The monarch calmly thus reply'd ;
 " Weigh well the cause, and then decide.
 That friend of your's you lately nam'd,
 Cupid, alone, is to be blam'd ;
 Then let the charge be justly laid.
 That idle boy neglects his trade,
 And hardly once in twenty years,
 A couple to your temple bears.
 The wretches, whom your office blends,
 Silenus now, or Plutes sends ;
 Hence care, and bitterness, and strife
 Are common to the nuptial life.

Believe me ; more than all mankind,
 Your vot'ries my compassion find ;
 Yet cruel am I call'd, and base,
 Who seek the wretched to release,
 The captive from his bonds to free,
 Indissoluble, but for me.

" 'Tis I entice him to the yoke ;
 By me your crouded altars smoke ;
 For mortals boldly dare the noose
 Secure, that death will set them loose."

FABLE V.

The Poet and his Patron.

WHY, Celia, is your spreading waist
 So loose, so negligently lac'd ?
 Why must the wrapping bed-gown hide
 Your snowy bosom's swelling pride ?
 How ill that dress adorns your head,
 Distain'd, and rump'd from the bed !
 Those clouds, that shade your blooming face,
 A little water might displace ;

As nature ev'ry morn bestows
 The crystal dew to cleanse the rose.
 Those tresses as the raven black,
 That wav'd in ringlets down your back;
 Uncomb'd, and injur'd by neglect,
 Destroy the face, which once they deck'd.

Whence this forgetfulness of dress?
 Pray, madam, are you marri'd? Yes.
 Nay, then indeed, the wonder ceases;
 No matter now how loose your dress is:
 The end is won; your fortune's made;
 Your sister now may take the trade.

Alas! what pity 'tis to find
 This fault in half the female kind!
 From hence proceed aversion, strife,
 And all that sours the wedded life.
 Beauty can only point the dart,
 'Tis neatness guides it to the heart;
 Let neatness then, and beauty strive
 To keep a wav'ring flame alive.

'Tis harder far (you'll find it true)
 To keep the conquest than subdue;
 Admit us once behind the screen,
 What is there farther to be seen?
 A newer face may raise the flame,
 But ev'ry woman is the same.
 Then study chiefly to improve
 The charm, that fix'd your husband's love;
 Weigh well his humour. Was it dress,
 That gave your beauty pow'r to bless?
 Pursue it still; be neater seen;
 'Tis always frugal to be clean;
 So shall you keep alive desire,
 And Time's swift wing shall fan the fire.

In garret high (as stories say)
 A poet sung his tuneful lay;
 So soft, so smooth his verse, you'd swear,
 Apollo and the Muses there.
 Thro' all the town his praises rung,
 His sonnets at the play-house sung;
 High wavering o'er his lab'ring head,
 The goddess Want her pinions spread,
 And with poetic fury fir'd
 What Phœbus faintly had inspir'd.

A noble youth, of taste and wit,
 Approv'd the sprightly things he writ,
 And sought him in his cobweb dome,
 Discharg'd his rent, and brought him home.

Behold him at the stately board,
 Who, but the poet, and my lord!
 Each day, deliciously he dines,
 And, greedy, quaffs the gen'rous wines.
 His sides were plump; his skin was sleek:
 And Plenty wanton'd on his cheek.
 Astonish'd at the change so new,
 Away th' inspiring goddess flew.

Now, dropt for politics, and news,
 Neglected lay the drooping Muse.
 Unmindful whence his fortune came,
 He stifled the poetic flame;
 Nor tale, nor sonnet, for my lady,
 Lamoon, nor epigram was ready.

With just contempt his patron saw,
 (Resolv'd his bounty to withdraw)
 And thus, with anger in his look,
 The late-repenting fool bespoke.

“Blind to the good that courts thee grown,
 Whence has the sun of favour shone?”

Delighted with thy tuneful art,
 Esteem was growing in my heart,
 But idly thou reject'st the charm,
 That gave it birth, and kept it warm."
 Unthinking fools alone despise
 The arts, that taught them first to rise.

FABLE VI.

The Wolf, the Sheep, and the Lamb.

DUTY demands, the parent's voice
 Should sanctify the daughter's choice ;
 In that is due obedience shown ;
 To choose belongs to her alone.

May horror seize his midnight hour,
 Who builds upon a parent's power,
 And claims, by purchase vile and base,
 The loathing maid for his embrace.
 Hence virtue sickens ; and the breast,
 Where Peace had built her downy nest,
 Becomes the troubled seat of care,
 And pines with anguish and despair.

A wolf, rapacious, rough, and bold,
 Whose nightly plunders thinn'd the fold,
 Contemplating his ill-spent life,
 And cloy'd with thefts, would take a wife.
 His purpose known, the savage race
 In num'rous crouds, attend the place ;
 For why, a mighty wolf he was,
 And held dominion in his jaws.
 Her fav'rite whelp each mother brought,
 And humbly his alliance sought ;
 But, cold by age, or else too nice,
 None found acceptance in his eyes.

It happen'd, as at early dawn,
He, solitary, cross'd the lawn,
Stray'd from the fold, a sportive lamb
Skipp'd wanton by her fleecy dam ;
When Cupid, foe to man and beast,
Discharg'd an arrow at his breast.
The tim'rous breed the robber knew,
And, trembling, o'er the meadow flew ;
Their nimblest speed the wolf o'ertook,
And, courteous, thus the dam bespoke.
" Stay, fairest, and suspend your fear,
Trust me, no enemy is near.
These jaws, in slaughter oft imbru'd,
At length have known enough of blood,
And kinder business brings me now,
Vanquish'd, at beauty's feet to bow.
You have a daughter—sweet, forgive
A wolf's address—in her I live :
Love from her eye like light'ning came,
And set my marrow all on flame.
Let your consent confirm my choice,
And ratify our nuptial joys.
Me ample wealth and pow'r attend ;
Wide o'er the plains my realms extend :
What midnight robber dare invade.
The folk, if I the guard am made ?
At home, the shepherd's cur may sleep,
While I secure his master's sheep ;
Discourse, like this, attention claim'd ;
Grandeur the mother's breast inflam'd ;
Now fearless by his side she walk'd,
Of settlements and jointures talk'd,
Propos'd, and doubled her demands
Of flow'ry fields and turnip lands.

The wolf agrees. Her bosom swells;
 To miss her happy fate she tells.
 And, of the grand alliance vain,
 Contemns her kindred of the plain.

The loathing lamb with horror hears,
 And wearies out her dam with pray'rs;
 But all in vain. Mamma best knew
 What unexperienc'd girls should do;
 So, to the neighb'ring meadow carry'd,
 A formal Ass the couple marry'd.

Torn from the tyrant-mother's side,
 The trembler goes a victim-bride,
 Reluctant meets the rude embrace,
 And bleats among the howling race.
 With horror oft her eyes behold
 Her murder'd kindred of the fold;
 Each day a sister lamb is serv'd,
 And at the glutton's table carv'd;
 The crashing bones he grinds for food,
 And slakes his thirst with streaming blood.
 Love, who the cruel mind detests,
 And lodges but in gentle breasts,
 Was now no more. . Enjoyment past,
 The savage hunger'd for the feast;
 But (as we find in human race,
 A mask conceals the villain's face)
 Justice must authorise the treat;
 Till then he long'd, but durst not eat.

As forth he walk'd, in quest of prey,
 The hunters met him on the way;
 Fear wings his flight; the marsh he sought,
 The snuffing dogs are set at sault.
 His stomach balk'd, now hunger gnaws,
 Howling he grinds his empty jaws;

Food must be had—and lamb is nigh ;
 His maw invokes the fraudulent lie.
 “ Is this” (dissembling rage, he cried)
 The gentle virtue of a bride ?
 That leagu'd with man's destroying race,
 She sets her husband for the chace ?
 By treach'ry prompts the noisy hound
 To scent his footsteps on the ground ?
 Thou trait'ress wile ! for this thy blood
 Shall glut my rage; and dye the wood !”
 So saying, on the lamb he flies,
 Beneath his jaw the victim dies.

FABLE VII.

The Goose and the Swans.

I HATE the face, however fair,
 That carries an affected air.
 The lisping tone, the shape constrain'd,
 The study'd look, the passion feign'd,
 Are fopperies, which, only tend
 To injure what they strive to mend.
 With what superior grace enchants
 The face which nature's pencil paints !
 Where eyes, unexercis'd in art,
 Glow with the meaning of the heart !
 Where freedom and good-humour sit,
 And easy gaiety, and wit !
 Tho' perfect beauty be not there,
 The master-lines, the finish'd air,
 We catch from ev'ry look delight,
 And grow enamour'd at the sight ;
 For beauty, tho' we all approve,
 Excites our wonder, more than love,

While the agreeable strikes sure,
And gives the wounds we cannot cure.

Why then, my Amoret, this care,
That forms you, in effect, less fair ?
If nature on your cheek bestows
A bloom, that emulates the rose,
Or from some heav'nly image drew
A form, Apelles never knew,
Your ill-jugd'd aid will you impart,
And spoil by meretricious art ?
Or had you, nature's errors, come
Abortive from the mother's womb,
Your forming care she still rejects,
Which only heightens her defects.
When such of glitt'ring jewels proud,
Still press the foremost in the croud,
At ev'ry public show are seen,
With look awry, and aukward mein,
The gaudy dress attracts the eye,
And magnifies deformity.
Nature may underdo her part,
But seldom wants the help of art ;
Trust her, she is your surest friend,
Nor made your form for you to mend.

A goose, affected, empty, vain,
The shrillest of the cackling train,
With proud, and elevated crest,
Precedence claim'd above the rest.

Says she, " I laugh at human race,
Who say geese hobble in their pace ;
Look here ! the sland'rous lie detect :
Not haughty man is so erect.
That peacock yonder ! lord, how vain
The creature's of his gaudy train !

If both were stript, I'd pawn my word,
 A goose would be the finer bird.
 Nature, to hide her own defects,
 Her bungled work with fin'ry decks ;
 Were geese set off with half that show,
 Would men admire the peacock? no."

Thus vaunting, cross the mead she stalks,
 The cackling breed attend her walks ;
 The sun shot down his noon-tide beams ;
 The swans were sporting in the streams ;
 Their snowy plumes, and stately pride
 Provok'd her spleen. " Why there," she cry'd,
 " Again what arrogance we see !—
 Those creatures ! how they mimic me !
 Shall ev'ry fowl the waters skim,
 Because we geese are known to swim ?
 Humility they soon shall learn.
 And their own emptiness discern."
 So saying, with extended wings,
 Lightly upon the wave she springs.
 Her bosom swells, she spreads her plumes,
 And the swan's stately crest assumes.
 Contempt and mockery ensu'd,
 And bursts of laughter shook the flood.

A swan, superior to the rest,
 Sprung forth, and thus the fool address'd.
 " Conceited thing ! elate with pride,
 Thy affectation all deride ;
 These airs thy awkwardness impart.
 And show thee plainly as thou art.
 Among thy equals of the flock ;
 Thou hast escap'd the public mock,
 And as thy parts to good conduce,
 Been deem'd an honest hobling goose.

“ Learn hence, to study wisdom's rules ;
Know, foppery's the pride of fools,
And striving nature to conceal,
You only her defects reveal.”

FABLE VIII.

The Lawyer and Justice.

LOVE ! thou divinest good below,
Thy pure delights few mortals know.
Our rebel hearts thy sway disown,
While tyrant lust usurps thy throne !
The bounteous God of nature made
The sexes for each other's aid,
Their mutual talents to employ,
To lessen ills, and heighten joy.
To weaker women he assign'd
That soft'ning gentleness of mind,
That can with sympathy impart
Its likeness to the roughest heart.
Her eyes with magic pow'r endu'd,
To fire the dull, and awe the rude,
His rosy fingers on her face
Shed, lavish ev'ry blooming grace,
And stamp'd (perfection to dislay)
His mildest image on her clay.
Man, active, resolute, and bold,
He fashion'd in a diff'rent mould.
With useful arts his mind inform'd,
His breast with nobler passions warm'd ;
He gave him knowledge, taste, and sense,
And courage for the fair's defence,
Her frame, resistless to each wrong,

Demands protection from the strong ;
To man she flies, when fear alarms,
And claims the temple of his arms.
By nature's author thus declar'd
The women's sov'reign, and her guard,
Shall man, by treach'rous wile invade,
The weakness he was meant to aid ?
While beauty, given to inspire,
Protecting love, and soft desire,
Lights up a wild-fire in the heart,
And to its own breast points the dart,
Becomes the spoiler's base pretence,
To triumph over innocence !

The wolf, that tears the tim'rous sheep,
Was never set the fold to keep ;
Nor was the tiger, or the pard
Meant the benighted traveller's guard ;
But man, the wildest beast of prey,
Wears friendship's semblance to betray ;
His strength against the weak employs,
And, where he should protect, destroys.

Past twelve o'clock, the watchman cry'd,
His brief the studious lawyer ply'd ;
The all prevailing fee lay nigh,
The earnest of to-morrow's lie ;
Sudden the furious winds arise,
The jarring casement shatter'd flies,
The doors admit a hollow sound,
And, rattling from their hinges bound ;
When justice, in a blaze of light,
Reveal'd her radiant form to sight.

The wretch with thrilling horror shook,
Loose ev'ry joint and pale his look,
Not having seen her in the courts,

Or found her mention'd in reports,
 He ask'd, with fault'ring tongue, her name,
 Her errand there, and whence she came?

Sternly the white-rob'd shade reply'd,
 (A crimson glow her visage dy'd)
 "Canst thou be doubtful who I am?
 Is Justice grown so strange a name?
 Were not your courts for Justice rais'd?
 'Twas there of old my altar blaz'd;
 My guardian thee did I elect,
 My sacred temple to protect,
 That thou and all thy venal-tribe,
 Should spurn the goddess for a bribe?
 Aloud the ruin'd client cries,
 Justice has neither ears, nor eyes!
 In foul alliance with the bar,
 'Gainst me the Judge denounces war,
 And rarely issues his decree,
 But with intent to baffle me."

She paus'd. Her breast with fury burn'd,
 The trembling lawyer thus return'd:—
 "I own the charge is justly laid,
 And weak the excuse that can be made;
 Yet search the spacious globe, and see
 If all mankind are not like me.
 The gown-man, skill'd in Romish lies,
 By faith's false glass deludes our eyes,
 O'er conscience rides without control,
 And robs the man, to save his soul.
 The doctor, with important face,
 By sly design, mistakes the case,
 Prescribes, and spins out the disease,
 To trick the patient of his fees.
 The soldier, rough with many a scar,
 And red with slaughter, leads the war;

If he a nation's trust betray,
The foe has offer'd double pay.

“ When Vice o'er all mankind prevails,
And weighty Int'rest turns the scales,
Must I be better than the rest,
And harbour Justice in my breast ?
On one side only take the fee,
Content with poverty and thee ? ”

“ Thou blind to sense, and vile of mind.”
Th' exasperated shade rejoin'd,
“ If virtue from the world is flown,
Will others' faults excuse thy own ?
For sickly souls the priest was made,
Physicians, for the body's aid,
The soldier guarded liberty,
Man woman, and the lawyer me ;
If all are faithless to their trust,
They leave not thee the less unjust,
Henceforth your pleadings I disclaim,
And bar the sanction of my name ;
Within your courts it shall be read,
That Justice from the law is fled.”

She spoke ; and hid in shades her face,
Till HARDWICK sooth'd her into grace.

FABLE IX.

The Farmer, the Spaniel, and the Cat.

WHY knits my dear her angry brow ?
What rude offence alarms you now ?
I said, that Delia's fair, tis true ;
But did I say, she equall'd you ?
Can't I another's face commend,

Or to her virtues be a friend,
But instantly your forehead frowns,
As if her merit lessen'd yours?
From female envy never free,
All must be blind, because you see.
Survey the gardens, fields, and bow'rs,
The buds, the blossoms, and the flow'rs,
Then tell me where the wood-bine grows,
That vies in sweetness with the rose?
Or where the lily's snowy white,
That throws such beauties on the sight?
Yet folly is it to declare,
That these are neither sweet, nor fair.
The crystal shines with fainter rays,
Before the diamond's brighter blaze;
And fops will say the diamond dies
Before the lustre of your eyes;
But I, who deal in truth, deny,
That neither shine when you are by.

When zephyrs o'er the blossoms stray,
And sweets along the air convey,
Shan't I the fragrant breeze inhale,
Because you breathe a sweeter gale?

Sweet are the flow'rs that deck the field,
Sweet is the smell the blossoms yield,
Sweet is the summer gale that blows,
And sweet, tho' sweeter you, the rose.

Shall envy, then, torment your breast,
If you are lovelier than the rest?
For while I give to each her due,
By praising them, I flatter you,
And praising most, I still declare
You fairest, where the rest are fair.

As at his board a farmer sate,
 Replenish'd by his homely treat,
 His fav'rite spaniel near him stood,
 And with his master shar'd the food ;
 The crackling bones his jaws devour'd,
 His lapping tongue the trenchers scour'd ;
 Till, sated now, supine he lay,
 And snor'd the rising fumes away.

The hungry cat, in turn, drew near,
 And humbly crav'd a servant's share,
 Her modest worth the master knew ;
 And straight the fat'ning morsel threw ;
 Enrag'd the snarling cur awoke,
 And thus, with spiteful envy, spoke.

“ They only claim a right to eat,
 Who earn by services their meat ;
 Me, zeal and industry inflame
 To scour the fields and spring the game.
 Or, plunging in the wintry wave,
 For man the wounded bird to save :
 With watchful diligence I keep,
 From prowling wolves, his fleecy sheep ;
 At home, his midnight hours secure,
 And drive the robber from the door.
 For this, his breast with kindness glows ;
 For this, his hand the food bestows ;
 And shall thy indolence impart
 A warmer friendship to his heart,
 That thus he robs me of my due,
 To pamper such vile things as you ?”
 “ I own” (with meekness puss reply'd)
 “ Superior merit on your side ;
 Nor does my breast with envy swell,
 To find it recompenc'd so well,

Yet I, in what my nature can,
 Contribute to the good of man.
 Whose claws destroy the pilf'ring mouse !
 Who drives the vermin from the house ?
 Or, watchful for the lab'ring swain,
 From lurking rats secures the grain ?
 From hence if he rewards bestow,
 Why should your heart with gall o'er flow ?
 Why pine, my happiness to see,
 Since there's enough for you and me ?"
 Thy words are just, the farmer cry'd,
 And spurn'd the snarler from his side.

FABLE X.

The Spider and the Bee.

THE nymph, who walks the public streets,
 And sets her cap at all she meets,
 May catch the fool who turns to stare ;
 But men of sense avoid the snare.

As on the margin of the flood,
 With silken line, my Lydia stood,
 I smil'd to see the pains you took,
 To cover o'er the fraudulent hook :
 Along the forest as we stray'd,
 You saw the boy his lime-twigs spread :
 Guess'd you the reason of his fear ?
 Lest, heedless, we approach'd too near ;
 For as behind the bush we lay,
 The linnet flutter'd on the spray.

Needs there such caution to delude
 The scaly fry, and feather'd brood ?

And think you, with inferior art,
 To captivate the human heart?
 The maid, who modesty conceals
 Her beauties, while she hides, reveals;
 Give but a glimpse, and fancy draws,
 Whate'er the Grecian Venus was.
 From Eve's first fig-leaf, to brocade,
 All dress was meant for fancy's aid;
 Which, evermore, delighted dwells,
 On what the bashful nymph conceals.

When Celia struts in man's attire,
 She shows too much, to raise desire;
 But from the hoop's bewitching round
 Her very shoe has power to wound.
 The roving eye, the bosom bare,
 The forward laugh, the wanton air
 May catch the fop; for gudgeons strike
 At the bare hook, and bait, alike,
 While salmon play regardless by,
 'Till art, like nature, forms the fly.

Beneath a peasant's homely thatch,
 A spider long had held her watch;
 From morn to night with restless care,
 She spun her web, and wove her snare.
 Within the limits of her reign,
 Lay many a heedless captive slain,
 Or flutt'ring struggled in the toils,
 To burst the chains, and shun her wiles.
 A straying bee, that perch'd hard by,
 Beheld her with disdainful eye,
 And thus began: "mean thing, give o'er,
 And lay thy slender threads no more;
 A thoughtless fly or two at most,
 Is all the conquests thou canst boast;

For bees of sense thy arts evade,
We see so plain the nets are laid.

“ The gaudy tulip, that displays
Her spreading foliage to the gaze,
That points her charms at all she sees,
And yields, to ev'ry wanton breeze,
Attracts not me. Where blushing grows
Guarded with thorns, the modest rose,
Enamour'd round and round I fly,
Or on her fragrant bosom lie ;
Reluctant she my ardour meets,
And bashful renders up her sweets.

“ To wiser heads attention lend,
And learn this lesson from a friend,
She who with modesty retires,
Adds fuel to her lover's fires,
While such incautious jilts as you,
By folly your own schemes undo.”

FABLE XI.

The young Lion and the Ape.

'TIS true, I blame your lover's choice,
Tho' flatter'd by the public voice,
And peevish grow, and sick to hear,
His exclamations, O how fair !
I listen not to wild delights,
And transports of expected nights ;
What is to me your hoard of charms,
The whiteness of your neck and arms ?
Needs there no acquisition more,
To keep contention from the door ?
Yes ; pass a fortnight, and you'll find,
All beauty cloy, but of the mind.

Sense and good humour ever prove
 The surest cords to fasten love.
 Yet Phillis (simplest of your sex)
 You never think, but to perplex.
 Coquetting it with ev'ry ape,
 That struts abroad in human shape ;
 Not that the coxcomb is your taste,
 But that it stings your lover's breast ;
 To-morrow you resign the sway,
 Prepar'd to honour, and obey,
 The tyrant-mistress change for life,
 To the submission of a wife.
 Your follies, if you can, suspend,
 And learn instruction from a friend.

Reluctant hear the first address,
 Think often, ere you answer, yes ;
 But once resolv'd, throw off disguise,
 And wear your wishes in your eyes.
 With caution ev'ry look forbear,
 That might create one jealous fear.
 A lover's rip'ning hopes confound,
 Or give the gen'rous breast a wound.
 Contemn the girlish arts to tease,
 Nor use your pow'r unless to please ;
 For fools alone with rigour sway,
 When, soon or late, they must obey.

The king of brutes, in life's decline,
 Resolv'd dominion to resign ;
 The beasts were summon'd to appear,
 And bend before the royal heir.
 They came ; a day was fix'd ; the croud
 Before their future monarch bow'd.
 A dapper monkey, proud and vain,
 Step'd forth, and thus address'd the train.

"Why cringe, my friends, with slavish awe,
 Before this pageant king of straw?
 Shall we anticipate the hour,
 And, ere we feel it, own his pow'r?
 The counsels of experience prize,
 I know the maxims of the wise;
 Subjection let us cast away,
 And live, the monarchs of to-day;
 'Tis ours the vacant hand to spurn,
 And play the tyrant each in turn,
 So shall he right from wrong discern,
 And mercy, from oppression, learn,
 At others' woes be taught to melt,
 And loath the ills himself has felt."

He spoke. His bosom swell'd with pride,
 The youthful lion thus reply'd.

"What madness prompts thee to provoke
 My wrath, and dare th' impending stroke?
 Thou wretched fool! can wrongs impart
 Compassion to the feeling heart?
 Or teach the grateful breast to glow,
 The hand to give, or eye to flow!
 Learn'd in the practice of their schools,
 From women thou hast drawn thy rules;
 To them return, in such a cause,
 From only such expect applause;
 The partial sex I don't condemn,
 For liking those who copy them.

"Would'st thou the gen'rous lion bind,
 By kindness bribe him to be kind;
 Good offices their likeness get,
 And payment lessens not the debt;
 With multiplying hand he gives
 The good from others he receives;

Or for the bad makes fair return,
And pays with int'rest scorn for scorn."

FABLE XII.

The Colt and the Farmer.

TELL me, Corinna, if you can,
Why so averse, so coy to man?
Did nature, lavish of her care,
From her best pattern form you fair,
That you, ungrateful to her cause,
Should mock her gifts, and spurn her laws!
And, miser-like, withhold that store,
Which, by imparting, blesses more?
Beauty's a gift, by heaven assign'd
The portion of the female kind;
For this the yielding maid demands
Protection at her lover's hands;
And tho' by wasting years it fade,
Remembrance tells him, once 'twas paid.

And will you then this wealth conceal,
For age to rust, or time to steal?
The summer of your youth to rove,
A stranger to the joys of love?
Then, when life's winter hastens on,
And youth's fair heritage is gone,
Dow'rless to court some peasant's arms,
To guard your wither'd age from harms?
No gratitude to warm his breast,
For blooming beauty once possess'd;
How will you curse that stubborn pride,
Which drove your bark across the tide,
And sailing before Folly's wind,
Left sense and happiness behind!

Corinna, lest these whims prevail,
To such as you, I write my tale.

A colt, for blood and mettled speed,
The choicest of the running breed,
Of youthful strength and beauty vain,
Refus'd subjection to the rein ;
In vain the groom's officious skill
Oppos'd his pride, and check'd his will ;
In vain the master's forming care
Restrain'd with threats, or sooth'd with pray'r,
Of freedom proud, and scorning man,
Wild o'er the spacious plains he ran,
Where'er luxuriant nature spread
Her flow'ry carpet o'er the mead,
Or bubbling streams, soft-gliding, pass,
To cool and freshen up the grass,
Disdaining bounds, he crop'd the blade,
And wanton'd in the spoil he made.

In plenty thus the summer pass'd,
Revolving winter came at last.

The trees no more a shelter yield :
The verdure withers from the field ;
Perpetual snows invest the ground ;
In icy chains the streams are bound ;
Cold nipping winds, and rattling hail
His lank, unshelter'd sides assail.

As round he cast his rueful eyes,
He saw the thatch-roof'd cottage rise.
The prospect touch'd his heart with cheer,
And promis'd kind deliv'rance near.
A stable, erst his scorn, and hate,
Was now become his wish'd retreat ;
His passion cool, his pride forgot,
A farmer's welcome yard he sought.

The master saw his woeful plight,
His limbs, that totter'd with his weight,
And, friendly, to the stable led,
And saw him litter'd, dress'd and fed:
In slothful ease, all night he lay ;
The servant rose at break of day ;
The market calls. Along the road,
His back must bear the pond'rous load :
In vain he struggles, or complains,
Incessant blows reward his pains,
To-morrow varies but his toil ;
Chain'd to the plough, he breaks the soil ;
While scanty meals at night repay,
The painful labours of the day.

Subdu'd by toil, with anguish rent,
His self-upbraidings found a vent.
" Wretch that I am !" he sighing said,
" By arrogance, and folly led ;
Had but my restive youth been brought
To learn the lesson nature taught,
'Then had I, like my sires of yore,
The prize for ev'ry courser bore ;
While man bestow'd rewards and praise,
And females crown'd my latter days.
Now lasting servitude's my lot,
My birth contemn'd, my speed forgot,
Doom'd am I, for my pride to bear,
A living death, from year to year."

FABLE' XIII.

The Owl and the Nightingale.

TO know the mistress' humour right,
See if her maids are clean and tight :
If Betty waits without her stays,
She copies but her lady's ways.
When miss comes in with boist'rous shout,
And drops no court'sey, going out,
Depend upon't, mamma is one,
Who reads, or drinks, too much alone.
If bottled beer her thirst assuage,
She feels enthusiastic rage,
And burns with ardour to inherit,
The gifts and workings of the spirit.
If learning crack her giddy brains,
No remedy, but death remains.
Sum up the various ills of life,
And all are sweet to such a wife.
At home, superior wit she vaunts,
And twits her husband with his wants ;
Her ragged offspring all around,
Like pigs are wallowing on the ground,
Impatient ever of control,
She knows no order but of soul ;
With books her litter'd floor is spread
Of nameless authors, never read ;
Foul linen, petticoats, and lace
Fill up the intermediate space ;
Abroad, at visitings, her tongue,
Is never still, and always wrong :
All meanings she defines away,
And stands, with truth and sense, at bay.

If e'er she meets a gentle heart,
 Skill'd in the housewife's useful art,
 Who makes her family her care,
 And builds Contentment's temple there,
 She starts at such mistakes in nature,
 And cries, "Lord, help us! what a creature."

Melessa, if the moral strike,
 You'll find the fable not unlike.

An owl puff'd up with self-conceit,
 Lov'd learning better than his meat;
 Old manuscripts he treasur'd up,
 And rummag'd ev'ry grocer's shop;
 At pastry-cooks was known to ply,
 And strip, for science, ev'ry pye,
 For modern poetry and wit,
 He had read all that Blackmore writ.
 So intimate with Curl was grown,
 His learned treasures were his own,
 To all his authors had access,
 And sometimes would correct the press.
 In logic he acquir'd such knowledge,
 You'd swear him fellow of a college.
 Alike to ev'ry art and science,
 His daring genius bid defiance,
 And swallow'd wisdom with that haste,
 That cits do custards at a feast.

Within the shelter of a wood,
 One ev'ning, as he musing stood,
 Hard by, upon a leafy spray,
 A nightingale began his lay.
 Sudden he starts, with anger stung,
 And, screeching, interrupts his song.

"Pert, busy thing, thy airs give o'er,
 And let my contemplations soar.

What is the music of thy voice,
 But jarring dissonance and noise?
 Be wise. True harmony thou'lt find,
 Not in the throat, but in the mind;
 By empty chirping not attain'd,
 But by laborious study gain'd.
 Go, read the authors, Pope explodes,
 Fathom the depth of Cibber's odes.
 With modern plays improve thy wit,
 Read all the learning, Henly writ,
 And if thou needs must sing, sing then,
 And emulate the ways of men:
 So shalt thou grow, like me refin'd,
 And bring improvement to thy kind."

"Thou wretch," the little warbler cry'd,
 "Made up of ignorance and pride,
 Ask all the birds, and they'll declar',
 A greater blockhead wings not air.
 Read o'er thyself; thy talents scan;
 Science was only meant for man.
 No senseless authors me molest,
 I mind the duties of my nest,
 With careful wing protect my young,
 And cheer their ev'nings with a song.
 Make short, the weary trav'ler's way,
 And warble in the poet's lay."

"Thus following nature, and her laws,
 From men and birds I claim applause,
 While, nurs'd in pedantry and sloth,
 An owl is scorn'd alike by both."

FABLE XIV.

The Sparrow and the Dove.

IT was, as learn'd traditions say,
 Upon an April's blithsome day,
 When pleasure ever on the wing,
 Return'd companion of the Spring ;
 And cheer'd the birds with am'rous heat,
 Instructing little hearts to beat ;
 A sparrow, frolick, gay, and young,
 Of bold address, and flippant tongue,
 Just left his lady of a night,
 Like him, to follow new delight.

The youth, of many a conquest vain,
 Flew off to seek the chirping train ;
 The chirping train he quickly found,
 And with a saucy ease bow'd round.

For ev'ry she his bosom burns,
 And this, and that he woos by turns ;
 And here a sigh, and there a bill,
 And here—"those eyes! so form'd to kill !
 And now with ready tongue, he strings
 Unmeaning, soft, resistless things ;
 With vows, and dem-me's skill'd to woo,
 As other pretty fellows do.
 Not that he thought this short essay,
 A prologue needful to his play ;
 "No, trust me," says our learned letter,
 "He knew the virtuous sex much better ;
 But these he held as specious arts,
 To show his own superior parts,
 The form of decency to shield,
 And give a just pretence to yield."

Thus finishing his courtly play,
 He mark'd the fav'rite of a day;
 With careless impudence drew near;
 And whisper'd Hebrew in her ear;
 A hint, which, like the mason's sign,
 The conscious can alone divine.

The flutt'ring nymph, expert at feigning,
 Cry'd, "Sir!—pray, Sir, explain your meaning—
 Go prate to those that may endure ye—
 To me this rudeness!—I'll assure ye!"
 Then off she glided like a swallow,
 As saying—you guess where to follow.

To such as know the party pet,
 'Tis needless to declare they met;
 The parson's barn, as authors mention,
 Confess'd the fair had apprehension,
 Her honour there secure from stain,
 She held all farther trifling vain,
 No more affected to be coy,
 But rush'd, licentious, on the joy.

"Hist, love!" the male companion cry'd;
 "Retire awhile; I fear we're spy'd.
 Nor was the caution vain. He saw
 A turtle rustling in the straw,
 While o'er her callow brood she hung,
 And fondly thus address'd her young:"

"Ye tender objects of my care!
 Peace, peace, ye little helpless pair;
 Anon he comes, your gentle sire,
 And brings you all your hearts require.
 For us, his infants, and his bride;
 For us, with only love to guide,
 Our lord assumes an eagle's speed,
 And, like a lion, dares to bleed,

Nor yet by wintry skies confin'd,
 He mounts upon the rudest wind,
 From danger tears the vital spoil,
 And with affection sweetens toil.

Ah, cease, too vent'rous ! cease to dare ;
 In thine, our dearer safety spare ;
 From him, ye cruel falcons, stray,
 And turn, ye fowlers, far away !

“ Should I survive to see the day,
 That tears me from myself away,
 That cancels all that heav'n could give,
 The life by which alone, I live,
 Alas, how more than lost were I,
 Who, in the thought, already die !

“ Ye pow'r, whom men and birds obey,
 Great rulers of your creatures, say,
 Why mourning comes, by bliss convey'd,
 And e'en the sweets of love allay'd ?
 Where grows Enjoyment, tall, and fair,
 Around it twines entangling care ;
 While Fear, for what our souls possess,
 Enervates ev'ry pow'r to bless ;
 Yet Friendship forms the bliss above,
 And, life ! what art thou, without love ?

Our hero, who had heard apart,
 Felt something moving in his heart,
 But quickly, with disdain, suppress'd
 The virtue, rising in his breast ;
 And first he feign'd to laugh aloud,
 And next, approaching, smil'd and bow'd.

“ Madam, you must not think me rude ;
 Good manners never can intrude ;
 I vow I came thro' pure good nature !
 (Upon my soul, a charming creature)

Are these the comforts of a wife?
This careful, cloister'd, moping life?
No doubt, that odious thing call'd duty,
Is a sweet province of a beauty.
Thou pretty ignorance ! thy will
Is measur'd to thy want of skill ;
That good old-fashion'd dame, thy mother,
Has taught thy infant years no other—
The greatest ill in the creation,
Is sure the want of education.

“ But think ye—tell me without feigning—
Have all these charms no farther meaning?
Dame nature, if you don't forget her,
Might teach your ladyship much better.
For shame, reject this mean employment,
Enter the world, and taste enjoyment,
Where time, by circling bliss we measure ;
Beauty was form'd alone for pleasure ;
Come, prove the blessing ; follow me ;
Be wise, be happy. and be free.”

“ Kind sir,” reply'd our matron chaste,
Your zeal seems pretty much in haste ;
I own, the fondness to be bless'd,
Is a deep thirst in ev'ry breast ;
Of blessings too I have my store,
Yet quarrel not, should heav'n give more ;
Then prove the change to be expedient,
And think me, sir, your most obedient.”

Here turning, as to one inferior,
Our gallant spoke, and smil'd superior.
“ Methinks to quit your boasted station
Requires a world of hesitation ;
Where brats and bonds are held a blessing,
The case, I doubt, is past redressing.

Why, child, suppose the joys I mention,
 Were the mere fruits of my invention ;
 You've cause sufficient for your carriage,
 In flying from the curse of marriage ;
 That sly decoy, with vary'd snares,
 That takes your widgeons in by pairs ;
 Alike to husband and to wife,
 The cure of love, and bane of life ;
 The only method of forecasting,
 To make misfortune firm and lasting ;
 The sin, by heaven's peculiar sentence,
 Unpardon'd thro' a life's repentance.
 It is the double snake, that weds
 A common tale to different heads,
 That leads the carcass still astray,
 By dragging each a diff'rent way.
 Of all the ills that may attend me,
 From marriage, mighty gods, defend me !

" Give me frank nature's wild demesne,
 And boundless track of air serene,
 Where Fancy, ever wing'd for change,
 Delights to sport, delights to range ;
 There, Liberty ! to thee is owing
 What'er of bliss is worth bestowing :
 Delights, still vary'd and divine,
 Sweet goddess of the hills, are thine.

" What say you now, you pretty pink you ?
 Have I, for once, spoke reason, think you ?
 You take me now for no romancer——
 Come, never study for an answer :
 Away ; cast ev'ry care behind you,
 And fly, where joy alone shall find you."

" Soft yet, return'd our female fencer,
 A question more or so—and then, sir,

You've rally'd me with sense exceeding,
With much fine wit, and better breeding.

But pray, sir, how do you contrive it?
Do those of your world never wive it?"

"No, no,"—"How then?"—"Why dare I tell?"

"What does the business full as well?"

"Do you ne'er love?"—"An hour at leisure."

"Have you no friendships?"—"yes, for pleasure."

"No care for little ones?"—"We get 'em,

"The rest the mothers mind—and let 'em."

"Thou wretch," rejoin'd the kindling dove,

"Quite lost to life, as lost to love!

Whene'er misfortune comes, how just!

And come misfortune surely must;

In the dread season of dismay,

In that your hour of trial, say,

Who then shall prop your sinking heart,

Who bear affliction's weightier part?

"Say, when the black-brow'd welkin bends,

And winter's gloomy form impends,

To mourning turns all transient cheer,

And blast the melancholy year;

For times at no persuasion stay,

Nor Vice can find perpetual May:

Then where's the tongue, by Folly led,

That soul of pertness, whither fled?

All shrunk within thy lonely nest,

Forlorn, abandon'd, and unblest'd?

No friends, by cordial bands ally'd,

Shall seek thy cold, unsocial side;

No chirping prattlers to delight,

Shall turn the long enduring night;

No bride her words of balm impart,
And warm thee at her constant heart.

“ Freedom, restrain'd by reason's force,
Is as the sun's unvarying course,
Benignly active, sweetly bright,
Affording warmth, affording light !
But, torn from Virtue's sacred rules,
Becomes a comet, gaz'd by fools.
Foreboding cares, and storms, and strife,
And fraught with all the plagues of life.

“ Thou fool ! by union ev'ry creature
Subsists, thro' universal nature ;
And this, to beings void of mind,
Is wedlock, of a meaner kind.

“ While womb'd in space, primæval clay
A yet unfashion'd embryo lay,
The source of endless good above
Shot down his spark of kindling love ;
Touch'd by the all-enliv'ning flame,
Then Motion first exulting came,
Each atom sought its sep'rate class,
Thro' many a fair enamour'd mass ;
Love cast the central charm around,
And with eternal nuptials bound.
Then Form an Order o'er the sky,
First train'd their bridal pomp on high,
The sun display'd his orb to sight,
And burn'd with hymeneal light.

“ Hence nature's virgin womb conceiv'd,
And with the genial burden heav'd ;
Forth came the oak, her first-born heir,
And scal'd the breathing steep of air ;
Then infant stems, of various use,
Imbib'd her soft maternal juice ;

The flow'rs, in early bloom disclos'd,
 Upon her fragrant breast repos'd;
 Within her warm embraces grew,
 A race of endless form, and hue;
 Then pour'd her lesser offspring round,
 And fondly cloth'd their parent ground.

“ Nor here alone the virtue reign'd,
 By matter's cumb'ring form detain'd;
 But thence, subliming, and refin'd,
 Aspir'd, and reach'd its kindred mind.
 Caught in the fond celestial fire,
 The mind perceiv'd unknown desire,
 And now with kind effusion flow'd,
 And now with cordial ardours glow'd,
 Beheld a sympathetic fair,
 And lov'd its own resemblance there;
 On all with circling radiance shone,
 But cent'ring, fix'd on one alone;
 There clasp'd the heaven-appointed wife,
 And doubled every joy of life.

“ Here ever blessing, ever bless'd,
 Resides this beauty of the breast.
 As from his palace, here the god
 Still beams effulgent bliss abroad,
 Here gems his own eternal round,
 The ring, by which the world is bound,
 Here bids his seat of empire grow,
 And builds his little heav'n below.

“ The bridal partners thus ally'd,
 And thus in sweet accordance ty'd,
 One body, heart, and spirit live,
 Enrich'd by ev'ry joy they give;
 Like echo, from her vocal hold,
 Return'd in music twenty fold.

Their union, firm and undecay'd,
 Nor time can shake, nor pow'r invade ;
 But as the stem, and scion stand,
 Ingrafted by a skilful hand,
 They check the tempest's wintry rage,
 And bloom and strengthen into age.
 A thousand amities unknown,
 And pow'rs, perceiv'd by Love alone,
 Endearing looks, and chaste desire,
 Fan and support the mutual fire,
 Whose flame perpetual, as resign'd,
 Is fed by an immortal mind.

" Nor yet the nuptial sanction ends ;
 Like Nile it opens and descends ;
 Which, by apparent winding led,
 We trace to its celestial head.
 The sire, first springing from above,
 Becomes the source of life and love,
 And gives his filial heir to flow,
 In fondness down on sons below ;
 Thus roll'd in one continu'd tide,
 To time's extremest verge they glide,
 While kindred streams, on either hand,
 Branch forth in blessings o'er the land.

" Thee, wretch! no lisp'ing babe shall name,
 No late returning brother claim,
 No kinsman on thy road rejoice,
 No sister greet thy ent'ring voice,
 With partial eyes no parents see,
 And bless their years, restor'd in thee.

" In age rejected, or declin'd,
 An alien, even among thy kind,
 The partner of thy scorn'd embrace,
 Shall play the wanton in thy face,

Each spark unplume thy little pride,
 All friendship fly thy faithful side ;
 Thy name shall, like thy carcass, rot,
 In sickness spurn'd, in death forgot.

“ All giving pow'r ! great source of life !
 O hear the parent ! hear the wife !
 That life, thou lendest from above,
 Tho' little, make it large in love.
 O bid my feeling heart expand
 To ev'ry claim, on every hand,
 To those, from whom my days I drew,
 To these, in whom those days renew,
 To all my kin, however wide,
 In cordial warmth, as blood ally'd,
 To friends with steely fetters twin'd,
 And to the cruel, not unkind.
 But chief the lord of my desire,
 My life, myself, my soul, my sire,
 Friends, children, all that wish can claim,
 Chaste passion clasp, and rapture name ;
 O spare him, spare him, gracious pow'r !
 O give him to my latest hour !
 Let me my length of life employ,
 To give my sole enjoyment joy !
 His love, let mutual love excite,
 Turn all my cares to his delight,
 And ev'ry needless blessing spare,
 Wherein my darling wants a share.

“ When he with graceful action woos,
 And sweetly bills, and fondly coos,
 Ah ! deck me to his eyes alone,
 With charms attractive as his own.
 And in my circling wings caress'd,
 Give all the lover to my breast.

Then in our chaste, connubial bed,
 My bosom pillow'd for his head,
 His eyes, with blissful slumbers close,
 And watch, with me, my lord's repose,
 Your peace around his temples twine,
 And love him with a love like mine.

“ And for I know his gen'rous flame,
 Beyond whate'er my sex can claim.
 Me too to your protection take,
 And spare me for my husband's sake ;
 Let one unruffled calm delight
 The loving and belov'd unite,
 One pure desire our bosoms warm,
 One will direct, one wish inform ;
 Thro' life one mutual aid sustain,
 In death, one peaceful grave contain.”

While, swelling with the darling theme,
 Her accents pour'd an endless stream,
 The well-known wings a sound impart,
 That reach'd her ear, and touch'd her heart.
 Quick dropp'd the music of her tongue,
 And forth with eager joy she sprung.
 As swift her ent'ring consort flew,
 And plum'd and kindled at the view ;
 Their wings, their souls, embracing meet,¹
 Their hearts with answ'ring measure beat ;
 Half lost in sacred sweet, and bless'd
 With raptures felt, but ne'er express'd.

Straight to her humble roof she led
 The partner of her spotless bed ;
 Her young, a flutt'ring pair arise,
 Their welcome sparkling in their eyes ;
 Transported, to their sire they bound,
 And hang with speechless action round,

In pleasure wrapt, the parents stand,
 And see their little wings expand;
 The sire his life-sustaining prize
 To each expecting bill applies,
 There fondly pours the wheaten spoil,
 With transport giv'n, tho' won with toil;
 While, all collected at the sight,
 And silent thro' supreme delight,
 The fair high heav'n of bliss beguiles,
 And on her lord and infants smiles.

The sparrow whose attention hung
 Upon the dove's enchanting tongue,
 Of all his little slights disarm'd,
 And from himself, by virtue charm'd,
 When now he saw, what only seem'd,
 A fact, so late a fable deem'd,
 His soul to envy he resign'd,
 His hours of folly to the wind,
 In secret wish'd a turtle too,
 And sighing to himself, withdrew.

FABLE XV.

The Female Seducers.

'TIS said of widow, maid, and wife,
 That honour is a woman's life;
 Unhappy sex! who only claim
 A being in the breath of fame,
 Which tainted, not the quick'ning gales,
 That sweep Sabæa's spicy vales,
 Nor all the healing sweets restore.
 That breathe along Arabia's shore.

The trav'ler, if he chance to stray,
 May turn uncensur'd to his way;
 Polluted streams again are pure;
 And deepest wounds admit a cure;
 But woman no redemption knows,
 The wounds of honour never close.

Tho' distant ev'ry hand to guide,
 Nor skill'd on life's tempestuous tide,
 If once her feeble bark recede,
 Or deviate from the course decreed,
 In vain she seeks the friendly shore,
 Her swifter folly flies before;
 The circling ports against her close,
 And shut the wand'rer from repose,
 'Till by conflicting waves opprest,
 Her found'ring pinnance sinks to rest.

Are there no off'rings to atone
 For but a single error? None.
 Tho' woman is avow'd of old,
 No daughter of celestial mould,
 Her temp'ring not without allay,
 And form'd but of the finer clay,
 We challenge from the mortal dame,
 The strength angelic natures claim;
 Nay more, for sacred stories tell,
 That ev'n immortal angels fell.

Whatever fills the teeming sphere,
 Of humid earth, and ambient air,
 With varying elements endu'd,
 Was form'd to fall, and rise renew'd.
 The stars no fix'd duration know;
 Wide oceans ebb, again to flow;
 The moon repletes her waining face,
 All-beauteous from her late disgrace,

And suns, that mourn approaching night,
 Refulgent rise, with new-born light.

In vain may Death and Time subdue,
 While nature mints her race anew,
 And holds some vital spark apart,
 Like virtue hid in ev'ry heart;
 'Tis hence, reviving warmth is seen,
 To clothe a naked world in green.
 No longer barr'd by winter's cold,
 Again the gates of life unfold;
 Again each insect tries his wing,
 And lifts fresh pinions on the spring;
 Again from ev'ry latent root,
 The bladed stem and tendril shoot,
 Exhaling incense to the skies,
 Again to perish, and to rise.

And must weak woman then disown
 The change to which a world is prone?
 In one meridian brightness shine,
 And ne'er like ev'ning suns decline?
 Resolv'd and firm alone? Is this
 What we demand of woman! Yes.

But should the spark of vestal fire,
 In some unguarded hour expire,
 Or should the nightly thief invade,
 Hesperia's chaste and sacred shade,
 Of all the blooming spoils possess'd,
 The dragon, Honour, charm'd to rest,
 Shall Virtue's flame no more return?
 No more, with virgin splendour burn?
 No more, the ravag'd garden blow,
 With spring's succeeding blossom?—No.
 Pity may mourn but not restore;
 And woman falls—to rise no more.

Within this sublunary sphere,
 A country lies—no matter where;
 The clime may readily be found,
 By all, who tread poetic ground.
 A stream, call'd life, across it glides,
 And equally the land divides;
 And here of Vice, the province lies,
 And there the hills of Virtue rise.

Upon a mountain's airy stand,
 Whose summit look'd to either land,
 An ancient pair their dwelling chose,
 As well for prospect, as repose;
 For mutual faith they long were fam'd,
 And Temp'rance, and Religion, nam'd.

A num'rous progeny divine,
 Confess'd the honours of their line;
 But in a little daughter fair,
 Was centr'd more than half their care;
 For heav'n, to gratulate her birth,
 Gave signs of future joy to earth:
 White was the robe this infant wore,
 And Chastity the name she bore.

And now the maid in stature grew.
 (A flow'r just op'ning to the view)
 Oft' thro' her native lawns she stray'd,
 And wrestling with the lambkins play'd,
 Her looks diffusive sweets bequeath'd;
 The breeze grew purer as she breath'd;
 The morn her radiant blush assum'd;
 The spring with earlier fragrance bloom'd:
 And nature, yearly, took delight,
 Like her, to dress the world in white.

But when her rising form was seen,
 To reach the crisis of fifteen;

Her parents up the mountain's head,
 With anxious step their carling led ;
 By turns they snatch'd her to their breast;
 And thus the fears of age express'd.

“ O joyful cause of many a care !
 O daughter, too divinely fair ;
 Yon world, on this important day,
 Demands thee to a dang'rous way ;
 A painful journey, all must go,
 Whose doubted period none can know.
 Whose due direction who can find,
 Where Reason's mute, and sense is blind.
 Ah, what unequal leaders these,
 'Thro' such a wide perplexing maze !
 Then mark the warnings of the wise,
 And learn what love and years advise.

“ Far to the right thy prospect bend,
 Where yonder tow'ring hills ascend ;
 Lo, there the arduous path's in view,
 Which virtue and her sons pursue ;
 With toil o'er less'ning earth they raise,
 And gain, and gain upon the skies.
 Narrow's the way her children tread,
 No walk for pleasure smoothly spread,
 But rough, and difficult, and steep,
 Painful to climb, and hard to keep.

“ Fruits immature those lands dispense,
 A food indelicate to sense,
 Of taste unpleasant, yet from those
 Pure Health, with cheerful Vigour flows,
 And Strength, unfeeling of decay,
 Throughout the long laborious way.

“ Hence as they scale that heav'nly road,
 Each limb is lighten'd of his load ;

From earth refining still they go,
And leave the mortal weight below;
Then spreads the strait, the doubtful clears,
And smooth the rugged path appears:
For custom turns fatigue to ease,
And taught by Virtue, pain can please.

“ At length, the toilsome journey o'er,
And near the bright celestial shore,
A gulph, black, fearful, and profound,
Appears, of either world the bound,
Thro' darkness, leading up to light;
Sense backward shrinks, and shuns the sight;
For there the transitory train,
Of Time, and Form, and Care, and Pain,
And Matter's gross, incumb'ring mass,
Man's late associates, cannot pass,
But sinking, quit th' immortal charge,
And leave the wond'ring soul at large;
Lightly she wings her obvious way,
And mingles with eternal day.

“ Thither, O thither wing thy speed,
Tho' pleasure charm, or pain impede;
To such th' all bounteous pow'r has giv'n,
For present earth, a future heav'n;
For trivial loss, unmeasur'd gain,
And endless bliss, for transient pain.
Then fear, ah! fear to turn thy sight,
Where yonder flow'ry fields invite;
Wide on the left the path-way bends,
And with pernicious ease descends;
There sweet to sense and fair to show,
New-planted Edens seem to blow,
Trees, that delicious poison bear;
For death is vegetable there.

" Hence is the frame of health unbrac'd;
 Each sinew slack'ning at the taste;
 The soul to passion yields her throne,
 And sees with organs not her own;
 While, like the slumb'rer in the night,
 Pleas'd with the shadowy dream of light,
 Before her alienated eyes,
 The scenes of fairy-land arise;
 The puppet-world's amusing show,
 Dipt in the gaily-colour'd bow,
 Sceptres, and wreaths, and glitt'ring things,
 The toys of infants, and of kings,
 That tempt along the baneful plain,
 The idly wise, and lightly vain,
 'Till verging on the gulphy shore,
 Sudden they sink, and rise no more.

" But list to what thy fates declare,
 Tho' thou art woman, frail as fair,
 If once thy sliding foot should stray,
 Once quit yon heav'n-appointed way,
 For thee, lost maid, for thee alone,
 Nor pray'rs shall plead, nor tears atone;
 Reproach, scorn, infamy, and hate,
 On thy returning steps shall wait.
 Thy form be loath'd by ev'ry eye,
 And ev'ry foot thy presence fly."

Thus arm'd with words of potent sound,
 Like guardian angels plac'd around,
 A charm, by truth divinely cast,
 Forward your young advent'rer pass'd.
 Forth from her sacred eye-lids sent,
 Like morn, fore-running radiance went,
 While Honour, hand-maid late assign'd,
 Upheld her lucid train behind.

" Awe-struck, the much admiring croud
 Before the virgin vision bow'd,
 Gaz'd with an ever new delight,
 And caught fresh virtue at the sight;
 For not of earth's unequal frame,
 They deem'd the heav'n compounded dame,
 If matter, sure the most refin'd,
 High-wrought and temper'd into mind,
 Some darling daughter of the day,
 And body'd by her native ray.

" Where-e'er she passes, thousands bend,
 And thousands, where she moves, attend;
 Her ways observant eyes confess,
 Her steps pursuing praises bless;
 While to the elevated maid
 Oblations, as to heav'n, are paid.

" 'Twas on an ever-blithsome day,
 The jovial birth of rosy May,
 When genial warmth, no more suppress'd,
 Now melts the frost in ev'ry breast.
 The cheek with secret flushing dyes,
 And looks kind things from chastest eyes;
 The sun with healthier visage glows,
 Aside his clouded kerchief throws,
 And dances up th' ethereal plain,
 Where late he us'd to climb with pain,
 While nature, as from bonds set free,
 Springs out, and gives a loose to glee.

" And now for momentary rest,
 The nymph her travel'd step repress'd,
 Just turn'd to view the stage attain'd;
 And glory'd in the height she gain'd.
 Out-stretch'd before her wide survey,
 The realms of sweet perdition lay,

And pity touch'd her soul with woe,
 To see a world so lost below;
 When straight the breeze began to breathe;
 Airs gently wafted from beneath,
 That bore commission'd witchcraft thence,
 And reach'd her sympathy of sense;
 No sounds of discord, that disclose
 A people sunk, and lost in woes.
 But as of present good possess'd;
 The very triumph of the bless'd,
 The maid in wrapt attention hung,
 While thus approaching sirens sung.

" Hither fairest, hither haste,
 Brightest beauty, come and taste,
 What the pow'rs of bliss unfold,
 Joys, too mighty to be told;
 Taste what extasies they give,
 Dying raptures taste, and live.

" In thy lap, disdain measure,
 Nature empties all her treasure,
 Soft desires, that sweetly languish,
 Fierce delights, that rise to anguish;
 Fairest, dost thou yet delay?
 Brightest beauty, come away.

" List not, when the froward chide,
 Sons of pedantry, and pride.
 Snarlers, to whose feeble sense,
 April sunshine is offence;
 Age and Envy will advise
 E'en against the joys they prize.

" Come, in Pleasure's balmy bowl,
 Slake the thirstings of thy soul,
 'Till thy raptur'd pow'rs are fainting
 With enjoyment, past the painting;

Fairest, dost thou yet delay ?
 Brightest beauty, come away."
 So sung the sirens, as of yore,
 Upon the false Ausonian shore ;
 And, O! for that preventing chain,
 That bound Ulysses on the main,
 That so our fair one might withstand
 The covert ruin now at hand.

The song her charm'd attention drew,
 When now the tempters stood in view ;
 Curiosity with prying eyes,
 And hands of busy, bold emprise ;
 Like Hermes, feather'd were her feet,
 And, like fore-running Fancy, fleet,
 By search untaught, by toil untir'd,
 To novelty she still aspir'd,
 Tasteless of ev'ry good possess'd,
 And but in expectation bless'd.

With her, associate Pleasure came,
 Gay Pleasure, frolic-loving dame,
 Her mein, all-swimming in delight,
 Her beauties, half reveal'd to sight ;
 Loose flow'd her garments from the ground,
 And caught the kissing winds around,
 As erst Medusa's looks were known,
 To turn beholders into stone,
 A dire reversion here they felt,
 And in the eye of Pleasure melt.
 Here glance, with sweet persuasion charm'd :
 Unnerv'd the strong, the steel'd disarm'd ;
 No safety, e'en the flying find,
 Who, vent'rous look but once behind.
 Thus was the much-admiring maid,
 While distant, more than half betray'd.

With smiles, and adulation bland,
 They join'd her side, and seiz'd her hand ;
 Their touch evenom'd sweets instill'd,
 Her frame with new pulsations thrill'd,
 While half consenting, half denying,
 Reluctant now, and now complying.
 Amidst a war of hopes, and fears,
 Of trembling wishes, smiling tears,
 Still down, and down, the winning pair,
 Compell'd the struggling, yielding fair.

As when some stately vessel, bound
 To blest Arabia's distant ground,
 Borne from her courses, haply lights
 Where Barca's flow'ry clime invites,
 Conceal'd around whose treach'rous land,
 Lurks the dire rock, and dang'rous sand ;
 The pilot warns with sail and oar,
 To shun the much-suspected shore,
 In vain ; the tide, too subtly strong,
 Still bears the wrestling bark along,
 Till, found'ring, she resigns to fate,
 And sinks, o'erwhelm'd, with all her freight.

So, baffling ev'ry bar to sin,
 And heaven's own pilot plac'd within,
 Along the devious smooth descent,
 With pow'rs increasing as they went,
 The dames, accusom'd to subdue,
 As with a rapid current, drew,
 And o'er the fatal bounds convey'd,
 The lost, the long-reluctant maid.

Here stop, ye fair ones, and beware,
 Nor send your fond affections there ;
 Yet, yet your darling, now deplor'd,
 May turn, to you and heav'n restor'd ;

Till then, with weeping honour wait,
The servant of her better fate,
With honour, left upon the shore,
Her friend and hand-maid now no more ;
Nor, with the guilty world upbraid
The fortunes of a wretch, betray'd ;
But o'er her failing cast a veil,
Rememb'ring, you yourselves are frail.
And now from all enquiring light,
Fast fled the conscious shades of night,
The damsel, from a short repose,
Confounded at her plight, arose.

As when, with slumb'rous weight oppress'd,
Some wealthy miser sinks to rest,
Where felons eye the glitt'ring prey,
And steal his hordè of joys away ;
He, borne where golden Indus streams,
Of pearl and quarry'd diamond dreams,
Like Midas, turns the glebe to ore,
And stands all-wrapt amidst his store ;
But wakens, naked, and despoil'd
Of that, for which his years had toil'd.
So far'd the nymph, her treasures flown,
And turn'd, like Niobe, to stone,
Within, without, obscure, and void,
She felt all ravag'd, all destroy'd.
And, O thou curst, insidious coast !
Are these the blessings thou canst boast ?
These, Virtue ! these the joys they find,
Who leave thy heav'n-top, hills behind ?
Shade me, ye pines ! ye caverns, hide !
Ye mountains, cover me ! she cry'd.
Her trumpet slander rais'd on high !
And told the tidings to the sky :

Contempt discharg'd a living dart,
Aside-long viper to her heart:
Reproach breath'd poisons o'er her face,
And soil'd, and blasted ev'ry grace;
Officious Shame, her hand-maid new,
Still turn'd the mirror to her view;
While those in crimes the deepest dy'd,
Approach'd to whiten at her side,
And ev'ry lewd, insulting dame,
Upon her folly rose to fame.

What should she do? Attempt once more,
To gain the late deserted shore?
So trusting, back the mourner flew,
As fast the train of fiends pursue.

Again, the farther shore's attain'd;
Again the land of Virtue gain'd;
But Echo gathers in the wind;
And shows her instant foes behind.
Amaz'd, with headlong speed she tends,
Where late she left an host of friends;
Alas! those shrinking friends decline,
Nor longer own that form divine,
With fear they mark the following cry,
And from the lonely trembler fly,
Or backward drive her on the coast,
Where peace was wreck'd, and honour lost.

From earth, thus hoping aid in vain,
To heav'n not daring to complain,
No truce, by hostile clamour giv'n,
And from the face of friendship driv'n,
The nymph sunk prostrate on the ground,
With all her weight of woes around.

Enthron'd within a circling sky,
Upon a mount o'er mountains high,

All radiant sate, as in a shrine,
 Virtue, first effluence divine ;
 Far, far above the scenes of woe,
 That shut this cloud-wrapt world below ;
 Superior goddess, essence bright,
 Beauty of uncreated light,
 Whom should Mortality survey,
 As doom'd upon a certain day,
 The breath of Frailty must expire,
 The world dissolve in living fire,
 The gems of heav'n, and solar flame,
 Be quench'd by her eternal beam ;
 And nature, quick'ning in her eye,
 To rise a new born phoenix, die.

Hence unreveal'd to mortal view,
 A veil around her form she threw,
 Which three sad sisters of the shade,
 Pain, Care, and Melancholy made.

Thro' this her all-enquiring eye,
 Attentive from her station high,
 Beheld, abandon'd to despair,
 The ruins of her fav'rite fair ;
 And with a voice, whose awful sound,
 Appall'd the guilty world around,
 Bid the tumultuous winds be still,
 To numbers bow'd each list'ning hill,
 Uncurl'd the surging of the main,
 And smooth'd the thorny bed of pain,
 The golden harp of heav'n she strung,
 And thus the tuneful goddess sung.

" Lovely penitent, arise,
 Come and claim thy kindred skies. •
 Come, thy sister angels say,
 Thou hast wept thy stains away.

“ Let experience now decide,
 ’Twixt the good and evil try’d,
 In the smooth, enchanted ground,
 Say, unfold the treasures found.

“ Structures, rais’d by morning dreams,
 Sands that trip the fitting streams,
 Down, that anchors on the air,
 Clouds, that paint their changes there.

“ Seas, that smoothly dimpling lie,
 While the storm impends on high,
 Showing in an obvious glass,
 Joys, that in possession pass.

“ Transient, fickle, light and gay,
 Flatt’ring, only to betray ;
 What, alas, can life contain !
 Life ! like all its circles——vain.

“ Will the stork, intending rest,
 On the billow build her nest ?
 Will the bee demand his store,
 From the bleak and bladeless shore ?

“ Man, alone, intent to stray,
 Ever turns from wisdom’s way,
 Lays up wealth in foreign land,
 Sows the sea, and ploughs the sand.

“ Soon this elemental mass,
 Soon the encumb’ring world shall pass,
 Form be wrapt in wasting fire,
 Time be spent, and life expire.

“ Then, ye boasted works of men,
 Where is your asylum then ?
 Sons of pleasure, sons of care,
 Tell me, mortals, tell me where ?

“ Gone, like traces on the deep,
 Like a sceptre, grasp’d in sleep,

Dews, exhal'd from morning glades,
Melting snows, and gliding shades.

“ Pass the world, and what's behind;
Virtue's gold, by fire refin'd;
From an universe deprav'd,
From the wreck of Nature sav'd.

“ Like the life-supporting grain,
Fruit of patience, and of pain,
On the swain's autumnal day,
Winnow'd from the chaff away.

“ Little trembler, fear no more,
Thou hast plenteous crops in store—
Seed, by genial sorrow sown,
More than all thy scorners own.

“ What tho' hostile earth despise,
Heav'n beholds with gentler eyes;
Heav'n thy friendless steps shall guide,
Cheer thy hours, and guard thy side.

“ When the fatal trump shall sound;
When th' immortals pour around,
Heav'n shall thy return attest,
Hail'd by myriads of the bless'd.

“ Little native of the skies,
Lovely penitent, arise;
Calm thy bosom, clear thy brow,
Virtue is thy sister now.

“ More delightful are my woes,
Than the rapture, Pleasure knows,
Richer far the weeds I bring,
Than the robes that grace a king.

“ On my wars of shortest date,
Crowns of endless triumph wait;
On my cares, a period bless'd,
On my toils, eternal rest.

“ Come, with Virtue at thy side,
 Come, be ev'ry bar defy'd;
 Till we gain our native shore,
 Sister, come, and turn no more.”

FABLE XVI.

Love and Vanity

THE breezy morning breath'd perfume,
 The wak'ning flow'rs unveil'd their bloom;
 Up with the sun from short repose,
 Gay Health and lusty Labour rose;
 The milk-maid carol'd at her pail,
 And shepherds whistled o'er the dale;
 When love, who led a rural life,
 Remote from bustle, state, and strife,
 Forth from his thatch-roof'd cottage stray'd
 And stroll'd along the dewy glade.

A nymph, who lightly tripp'd it by,
 To quick attention turn'd his eye;
 He mark'd the gesture of the fair,
 Her self-sufficient grace and air;
 Her steps, that, mincing, meant to please,
 Her study'd negligence and ease;
 And, curious to enquire what meant
 This thing of prettiness and paint,
 Approaching, spoke, and bow'd observant,
 The lady, slightly, “ Sir, your servant.”

“ Such beauty in so rude a place!
 Fair one, you do the country grace;
 At court, no doubt, the public care;
 But Love has small acquaintance there.”

"Yes, Sir," reply'd the flutt'ring dame,
 'This form confesses whence it came?
 But dear variety, you know,
 Can make us pride and pomp forego.
 My name is Vanity. I sway
 The utmost islands of the sea.
 Within my court all honour centers;
 I raise the meanest soul that enters,
 Endow with latent gifts and graces,
 And model fools for posts and places.

"As Vanity appoints at pleasure,
 The world receives its weight, and measure;
 Hence all the grand concerns of life,
 Joy, cares, plagues, passions, peace, and strife.

"Reflect how far my power prevails,
 When I step in, where nature fails,
 And ev'ry breach of sense repairing,
 Am bounteous still, where heav'n is sparing.

"But chief in all their arts, and airs,
 Their playing, painting, pouts, and pray'rs,
 Their various habits, and complexions,
 Fits, frolics, foibles, and perfections,
 Their robing, curling, and adorning,
 From noon to night, from night to morning,
 From six to sixty, sick or sound,
 I rule the female world around."

"Hold there a moment," Cupid cry'd,
 "Nor boast dominion quite so wide,
 Was there no province to invade,
 But that by love and meekness sway'd?
 All other empire I resign,
 But be the sphere of beauty mine.

"For in the downy lawn of rest,
 That opens on a woman's breast,

Attended by my peaceful train,
I choose to live, and choose to reign.

“ Far-sighted Faith I bring along,
And Truth above an army strong—
And Chastity, of icy mold,
Within the burning tropics cold—
And Lowliness, to whose mild brow,
The pow'r and pride of nations bow—
And Modesty, with down-cast eye,
That lends the morn her virgin dye—
And Innocence, array'd in light,
And Honour, as a tow'r upright ;
With sweetly winning graces, more
Than poets ever dreamt of yore,
In unaffected conduct free,
All smiling sisters, three times three—
And rosy Peace, the cherub bless'd,
That nightly sings us all to rest.

“ Hence, from the bud of nature's prime,
From the first step of infant time,
Woman, the world's appointed light,
Has skirted ev'ry shade with white ;
Has stood for imitation high,
To ev'ry heart and ev'ry eye :
From ancient deeds of fair renown,
Has brought her bright memorials down,
To Time affix'd perpetual youth,
And form'd each tale of love and truth.

“ Upon a new Promethean plan,
She moulds the essence of a man—
Tempers his mass, his genius fires,
And, as a better soul, inspires.

“ The rude she softens, warms the cold,
Exalts the meek, and checks the bold,

Calls Sloth from his supine repose,
Within the coward's bosom glows,
Of pride unplumes the lofty crest,
Bids bashful merit stand confess'd,
And, like coarse-metal from the mines,
Collects, irradiates, and refines.
The gentle science, she imparts,
All manners smooths, informs all hearts;
From her sweet influence are felt,
Passions that please, and thoughts that melt;
To stormy rage she bids control,
And sinks serenely on the soul,
Softens Deucalion's flinty race,
And tunes the warring world to peace.

“ Thus arm'd to all that's light and vain,
And freed from thy fantastic chain,
She fills the sphere, by heav'n assign'd,
And, rul'd by me, o'er-rules mankind.

He spoke. The nymph impatient stood,
And laughing, thus her speech renew'd.

“ And pray, sir, may I be so bold,
To hope your pretty tale is told,
And next demand, without a cavil,
What new Utopia do you travel?
Upon my word, these high-flown fancies
Show depth of learning—in romances.
Why, what unfashion'd stuff you tell us,
Of buckram dames, and tiptoe fellows!
Go, child! and when you're grown maturer,
You'll shoot your next opinion surer.

“ O such pretty knack at painting!
And all for soft'ning and for fainting!
Guess now who can, a single feature,
Thro' the whole piece of female nature!

Then mark, my lesser hand may fit
The lines too coarse for Love to hit.

“ 'Tis said, that woman, prone to changing,
Thro' all the rounds of folly ranging,
On life's uncertain ocean riding,
No reason, rule, nor rudder guiding,
Is like the comet's wand'ring light,
Excentric, ominous, and bright :
Trackless, and shifting as the wind,
A sea, whose fathom none can find ;
A moon, still changing, and revolving,
A riddle, past all human solving,
A bliss, a plague, a heav'n, a hell,
A——something, that no man can tell.

“ Now learn a secret from a friend,
But keep your council, and attend.

“ Tho' in their tempers thought so distant,
Nor with their sex, nor selves consistent,
'Tis but the diff'rence of a name,
And ev'ry woman is the same.
For as the world, however vary'd,
And, thro' unnumber'd changes carry'd,
Of elemental modes and forms,
Clouds, meteors, colours, calms, and storms,
Tho' in a thousand suits array'd,
Is of one subject-matter made,
So, sir, a woman's constitution,
The world's enigma, find solution,
And let her form be what you will,
I am the subject-essence still.

“ With the first spark of female sense,
The speck of being, I commence,
Within the womb make fresh advances,
And dictate future qualities and fancies ;

Thence in the growing form expand,
With childhood travel hand in hand,
And give a taste to all their joys,
In gewgaws, rattles, pomp, and noise.
And now, familiar, and unnaw'd,
I send the flutt'ring soul abroad ;
Prais'd for her shape, her air, her mein,
The little goddess, and the queen,
Takes at her infant shrine oblation,
And drinks sweet draughts of adulation.

“ Now blooming, tall, erect, and fair,
To dress, becomes her darling care ;
The realms of beauty then I bound,
I swell the hoop's enchanted round,
Shrink in the waist's descending size,
Heav'd in the snowy bosom, rise,
High on the floating lappet sail,
Or, curl'd in tresses kiss the gale.
Then to her glass, I lead the fair,
And show the lovely idol there,
Where, struck as by divine emotion,
She bows with most sincere devotion,
And, numb'ring ev'ry beauty o'er
In secret bids the world adore.

“ Then all for parking, and parading,
Coqueting, dancing, masquerading :
For balls, plays, courts, and crouds, what passion!
And churches, sometimes—if the fashion ;
For woman's sense of right and wrong,
Is rul'd by the almighty throng,
Still turns to each meander tame,
And swims the straws of ev'ry stream.
Her soul intrinsic worth rejects,
Accomplish'd only in defects,

Such excellence is her ambition,
Folly, her wisest acquisition,
And ev'n from pity and disdain,
She'll cull some reason to be vain.

“ Thus, sir, from every form and feature,
The wealth and wants of female nature,
And ev'n from Vice, which you'd admire,
I gather fuel to my fire,
And on the very base of shame,
Erect my monument of fame.

“ Let me another truth attempt,
Of which your godship has not dreamt.

“ Those shining virtues which you muster,
Whence, think you, they derive their lustre!
From native honour, and devotion!

O yes, a mighty likely notion!
Trust me, from titled dames to spinners,
'Tis I make saints, whoe'er makes sinners;
'Tis I instruct them to withdraw,
And hold presumptuous man in awe;
For female worth, as I inspire,
In just degrees, still mounts the higher,
And Virtue, so extremely nice,
Demands long toil, and mighty price.
Like Sampson's pillars, fix'd elate,
I bear the sex's tott'ring state,
Sap these, and in a moment's space,
Down sinks the fabrick to its base.

Alike from titles, and from toys,
I spring, the fount of female joys,
In every widow, wife, and miss,
The sole artificer of bliss.
For them each tropic I explore;
I cleave the sand of ev'ry shore;

To them uniting India's sail,
Sabæa breathes her farthest gale ;
For them the bullion I refine,
Dig sense, and virtue from the mine,
And from the bowels of invention,
Spin out the various arts you mention.

“ Nor bliss alone my pow'rs bestow ;
They hold the sovereign balm of woe.
Beyond the stoic's boasted art,
I sooth the heavings of the heart ;
To pain give splendour and relief,
And gild the pallid face of Grief.

“ Alike the palace and the plain,
Admit the glories of my reign ;
Thro' ev'ry age, in ev'ry nation,
Taste, talents, tempers, state, and station,
Whate'er a woman says, I say ;
Whate'er a woman spends, I pay ;
Alike I fill, and empty bags,
Flutter in finery and rags,
With light coquets thro' folly range,
And with the prude disdain to change.

“ And now you'd think 'twixt you and I,
That things were ripe for a reply—
But soft, and while I'm in the mood,
Kindly permit me to conclude,
Their utmost mazes to unravel,
And touch the farthest step they travel.

“ When ev'ry pleasure's run aground,
And Folly tir'd thro' many a round,
The nymph conceiving discontent hence,
May ripen to an hour's repentance,
And vapours shed in pious moisture,
Dismiss her to a church, or cloister ;

Then on I lead her, with devotion,
 Conspicuous in her dress and motion,
 Inspire the heav'nly-breathing air,
 Roll up the lucid eye in pray'r,
 Soften the voice, and in the face,
 Look melting harmony and grace.

“ Thus far extends my friendly pow'r,
 Nor quits her in her latest hour ;
 The couch of decent pain I spread,
 In form recline her languid head,
 Her thoughts I methodize in death,
 And part not with her parting breath ;
 Then do I set, in order bright,
 A length of funeral pomp to sight,
 The glitt'ring tapers, and attire,
 The plumes that whiten o'er her bier ;
 And last, presenting to her eye,
 Angelic fineries on high,
 To scenes of painted bliss I waft her,
 And form the heav'n she hopes hereafter.

“ In truth,” rejoin'd Love's gentle god,
 “ You've gone a tedious length of road,
 And strange, in all the toilsome way,
 No house of kind refreshment lay,
 No nymph, whose virtues might have tempted,
 To hold her from her sex exempted.

“ For one, we'll never quarrel, man ;
 Take her, and keep her if you can ;
 And pleas'd I yield to your petition,
 Since every fair, by such permission,
 Will hold herself the one selected,
 And so my system stands protected.”

“ O deaf to virtue, deaf to glory,
 To truths divinely vouch'd in story !

The godhead in his zeal return'd,
 And kindling at her malice burn'd.
 Then sweetly rais'd his voice, and told
 Of heav'nly nymphs, rever'd of old ;
 Hypsipyle, who sav'd her sire ;
 And Portia's love, approv'd by fire ;
 Alike Penelope was quoted,
 Nor laurel'd Daphne pass'd unnoted.
 Nor Laodamia's fatal garter,
 Nor fam'd Lucretia, honour's martyr,
 Alceste's voluntary steel,
 And Cath'rine, smiling on the wheel.

“ But who can hope to plant conviction,
 Where cavil grows on contradiction ?
 Some she evades or disavows,
 Demurs to all, and none allows ;
 A kind of ancient thing, call'd fables !
 And thus the goddess turn'd the tables.

Now both in argument grew high,
 And choler flash'd from either eye ;
 Nor wonder each refus'd to yield,
 The conquest of so fair a field.

When happily arriv'd in view,
 A goddess, whom our grandames knew,
 Of aspect grave, and sober gait,
 Majestic, awful, and sedate—
 As heav'n's autumnal eve serene,
 Where not a cloud o'ercast the scene ;
 Once Prudence call'd, a matron fam'd,
 And in old Rome, Cornelia nam'd.

Quick at a venture, both agree,
 To leave their strife to her decree.

And now by each the facts were stated,
 In form, and manner as related ;

The case was short. They crav'd opinion,
Which held o'er females chief dominion ;
When thus the goddess, answ'ring mild,
First shook her gracious head, and smil'd.

“ Alas ! how willing to comply,
Yet how unfit a judge am I,
In times of golden date, 'tis true,
I shar'd the fickle sex with you ;
But from their presence long precluded,
Or held as one whose form intruded,
Full fifty annual suns can tell,
Prudence has bid the sex farewell.”

In this dilemma, what to do,
Or who to think of, neither knew ;
For both, still biass'd in opinion,
And arrogant of sole dominion,
Were forc'd to hold the case compounded,
Or leave the quarrel where they found it.

When in the nick, a rural fair,
Of inexperienc'd gait and air,
Who ne'er had cross'd the neighb'ring lake,
Nor seen the world beyond a wake,
With cambric coif, and kerchief clean,
Tript lightly by them o'er the green.

“ Now, now !” cry'd Love's triumphant child
And at approaching conquest smil'd,
“ If Vanity will once be guided,
Our diff'rence soon may be decided ;
Behold yon wench, a fit occasion,
To try your force of gay persuasion.
Go you, while I retire aloof,
Go, put those boasted pow'rs to proof ;
And if your prevalence of art,
Transcends my yet unerring dart,

I give the fav'rite contest o'er,
And ne'er will boast my empire more."

At once, so said, and so consented ;
And well our goddess seem'd contented ;
Nor pausing made a moment's stand,
But tript, and took the girl in hand.

Mean while the godhead, unalarm'd,
As one to each occasion arm'd,
Forth from his quiver cull'd a dart,
That erst had wounded many a heart ;
Then bending, drew it to the head ;
The bow-string twang'd, the arrow fled,
And, to her secret soul address'd,
Transfix'd the whiteness of her breast.

But here the dame, whose guardian care,
Had to a moment watch'd the fair,
At once her pocket-mirror drew,
And held the wonder full in view ;
As quickly, rang'd in order bright,
A thousand beauties rush to sight,
A world of charms, till now unknown,
A world, reveal'd to her alone ;
Enraptur'd stands the love-sick maid,
Suspended o'er the darling shade,
Here only fixes to admire,
And centers every fond desire.

FINIS.

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